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THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

WORTHY

OF ALL ACCEPTATION;

CONTAINING

A REPLY TO MR. BUTTON's REMARKS,

AND THE

OBSERVATIONS OF PHILANTHROPOS.

BY ANDREW FULLER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN ADDRESS TO

CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

[Selected from Smith's Lectures on the Nature and End of the Sacred Office.]

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While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.
Jesus Christ.

By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.
Paul.

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PREFACE.

THE prevalence of truth and righteousness is doubtless an object of great importance; nor is the former any less necessary to the latter, than both are to the welfare of mankind. If controversy is of any use, it is because it tends to bring truth to light. It too often unhappily falls out, however, that the parties themselves are not the first who are convinced by each others reasonings; but on the contrary, are as far, and perhaps farther asunder, when they leave off, than when they began: this is not very difficult to be accounted for, though it is much to be lamented. Perhaps there are very few controversies wherein there is not room for mutual concessions. The backwardness so generally discovered to this by writers, and the determination that too commonly appears on both sides to maintain at all events their own principles, have given much disgust to many readers, and made them almost ready to despair of edification by reading controversy.

But though it must be granted that such conduct affords a just ground of disgust towards a writer, yet there is not the same reason for being digusted with controversial writing. Whatever be the prejudices of the parties, and their rigid adherence to their own opinions; if a controversy is carried on with any good

degree of judgment, truth is likely to come out between them; and what avails it on whose side it is found, if it is but found? The obstinacy of the writers is a sin, but it is a sin that belongs to themselves; the reader may get good notwithstanding this, sufficient to repay him for all his trouble.

For my own part, I never imagined myself infallible. I all along thought, though I at the time could see no mistakes in the piece I had written (if I had, I should certainly have corrected them;) yet no doubt other people, who would look at it with different eyes from mine, would discern some; and I trust it has been my desire to lie open to instruction from every quarter. It would be the shame and folly of any man, especially of one of my years, to act otherwise.

I will not pretend to be free from that spirit which easily besets a person engaged in controversy; but thus much I can say, I have endeavoured *to read each of my opponents with a view to conviction; and it becomes me to acknowledge that I have not been altogether disappointed. There are some passages, which, if I had the piece to write over again, I should expunge, and others which I should alter: I should endeavour in some places to be more explicit, and in others more upon my guard against every appearance of unkind reflection. There are also some other lesser matters which I shall acknowledge in their place. Justice requires me to say thus much; but as to the main sentiment endeavoured to be established, notwithstanding what has been written, I must say it appears to me unshaken. If in my judgment* that *had*

been overthrown, the attention of the reader should not have been called upon by the present reply.

In the publications of both my opponents I see different degrees of merit, and for each of their persons and characters I feel a most sincere regard. I doubtless think them both beside the truth; and I suppose they may think the same of me. I desire to feel every*

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* *Both* your opponents; but why not reply to Dr. WITHERS? Because his letter appears to me to contain nothing like an answer to that against which it is written. The utmost I can gather that looks any thing like evidence, may be summed up in a very small compass. "There can be no duty, it is said, without a voluntary compact. If a compact with God cannot be found on holy record—if it be evident that man is destitute of the powers essential to the existence of such a compact, it cannot be his duty to believe." (P. 21, 26.) It might have been added with equal propriety, *nor to do any thing else which is enjoined him.* But I would ask, to whom are we *unprofitable* servants, as doing no more than our DUTY; to men with whom we made compacts, or to God? If Dr. W.'s reasoning is just, it is not the *duty* of children to be subject to their parents.

Again; Men are not all bound to have an equal "number of ideas, to believe without evidence, examination, or beyond their natural capacities." (40, 59, 75, 76.) This is very true; neither is there any thing in the treatise which Dr. W. has opposed, that asserts the contrary.

I had said, If men are not obliged to approve of what God reveals, they may be right in disapproving it. Much is said to expose this to ridicule. It is said to be "either an *identical proposition*, or such an arbitrary combination of words as, it seems, will prove any thing." (85, 86.) It is not the first, unless a negative and a positive idea are necessarily the same. Christ declared, saying, "He that is *not with me*, is *against me*." This is as much an identical proposition as that in question, and might be treated in the same manner. If there is any mistake

degree of candor towards all that differ from me, which a person ought to feel towards those whom he believes to be mistaken: and this I think should go to such a length as to entertain the most sincere good will towards their persons, and to put the most favourable construction that can in justice be put upon their supposed mistakes.—But, after all, I believe truth to be

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in the argument, it must lie in my taking it for granted upon Christ's testimony just quoted, that though there is an evident difference between a negative and positive idea, yet *in this case* the difference is not such as to admit a possibility of a medium. Every one knows *there are cases* in which a medium between ideas of that description may have place; as between my "not watching my neighbour's house, and breaking it open." In that case it is not my duty to do either; but unless such a medium could be affirmed between *not* approving and *dis*approving of what God reveals, the argument still retains its force, and the syllogistical parade must appear to be only a play of words.

Dr. W. had given us reason to expect something very considerable against the distinction of *natural and moral inability;* but what does it all amount to? Why, ability or inability is not, strictly speaking, predicable of the *will*, but of the *man*. (89, 90) I have looked over what I have written on that subject, and cannot find that I have any where predicated inability of the *will*, but of the *man*, through *the perversion of his will*. Be that, however, as it may, Dr. W.'s reasoning is of no force. An idle servant is enjoined a piece of labour—he replies, I *cannot* do it—he is told his inability lies in his *will*—he turns metaphysician, and gravely assures his master that inability is not predicable of the will, but of the man; and therefore insists upon it that he is blameless?

If Dr. W. means no more than this, that when the terms ability or inability are applied to the volitions of the mind they are not used in a *literal*, but in a *figurative* sense, I do not know any person that will dispute what he says. At the same time it

important; and so long as I consider the belief of it to be every person's duty, according to his natural capacities and opportunities to understand it, I cannot subscribe to the innocence of error. God is the governor of the mind as well as of the actions. He governs the former by rule as well as the latter; and all deviations from that rule must arise either from its being not

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ought to be observed that these terms *are* applied to what depends upon the volitions of the mind, though it be in a figurative sense; and that both in scripture and in common life. It is as common to say of a person of a very covetous temper, that he is *incapable* of a generous action, as it is to say of a person who has lost the use of his faculties, he is *incapable* of acting at all. And thus the scriptures apply the terms—It is as expressly said of Joseph's brethren, that they *could not* speak peaceably to him, as it is said of Zacharias, that he was dumb, and *could not* speak to the people when he came out of the temple.

The ideas in these cases are really and essentially distinct; and so long as they continue to be expressed both in scripture and in common conversation, by the same word, if we would understand what we speak or write; a distinction concerning the nature of inability, amounting to what is usually meant by natural and moral, becomes absolutely necessary.

Dr. W. instead of overthrowing this sentiment, has undesignedly confirmed it: for though he can excuse a want of love to *God;* yet if any thing is directed against *himself*, the case is altered. Our Lord speaking of the *Pharisees*, and their blasphemous reproaches against him, says, "How *can* ye being evil, speak good things?" Now according to the theory of this writer, such an inability must sufficiently excuse them. But if a *Pharisee* speak evil of him, he is grievously provoked. Who these Pharisees are, and what they have said of Dr. W. I know not. I only ask, is it not a pity but his philanthropy could excuse those who reproach him, as well as those who dishonour God?

sufficiently level to our capacities, or from inattention, prejudice, or some other criminal cause.

I am far from wishing to impute blame to another in any case, farther than I am willing, on a similar supposition, to take it to myself. I am liable to err as well as others; but then I apprehend, so far as I do

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Philanthropy* is doubtless an amiable temper of mind, when regulated by rules of righteousness; but there is a sort of love which the language of inspiration deems *hatred.* If I were merely as a member of civil Society, to visit a number of convicts under a righteous sentence of death—and if, instead of persuading them of the goodness of the laws, which they had violated, of the great evil of their conduct, and of the equity of their punishment, and conjuring them to justify their country, and sue for mercy——If, I say, instead of this, I should go about to palliate their crimes, and assure them that the governor by whose laws they were condemned was the *author* of all their misfortunes—that though I believed some of them, at least, must certainly suffer; yet I must acknowledge I could see no *justice* in the affair, there being no proportion between the punishment and the crime——I might call myself the friend of mankind, and give what flattering titles I pleased to what I had been doing; but impartial spectators would deem me an enemy to truth and righteousness, an enemy to my country; yea, an enemy to the very persons whose cause I espoused.

But with the principles of Dr. W. I have no concern. There is reason to hope they are too undisguised to gain credit with serious minds. I am under no obligation to refute them; none, however, at present. Before the sentiments of any writer are entitled to a refutation, it is requisite that he pay some regard, at least, to sobriety and truth.

Whether Dr. W. can acquit himself of *wilful and known-falsehood,* I cannot tell; but this I know, he has in a great many instances, imputed *sentiments* to me of which I never thought, and

* Alluding to the title of his book.

err, that it is owing to a want of diligence, and impartiality, or to some such cause, which God forbid that I should ever vindicate by pronouncing it innocent.

If I am in an error in the sentiments here defended, it will be the part of candor in my opponents to allow

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sentences which never proceeded from my pen. The former might be imputed to *mistake;* and if there had been only an instance or two of the latter, charity might have overlooked them; but the number of gross misrepresentations is such as admits of no such construction.

Not to mention his exclamations of "punishment without guilt"—of "unmerited damnation," (6, 7.) which seem to be his own sentiments rather than mine; as he believes, if I understand him, that men and devils will be eternally punished for that of which God is the *author*—(176 with 50, 55.) not to mention these, I say, what could he think of himself in taking such freedoms as the following? "You draw I know not what conclusions concerning *faith.* As though a generation of vipers had been perfectly holy, if the fulness of time had not given Jesus to his people (177, 178.)—What combinations of deformity and weakness occur in many pious attempts to *spiritualize,* AS YOU PHRAZE IT, the works of nature (63.)—To assert it to be the DUTY of all to believe *that they are of* the fold of the heavenly Shepherd is an impious absurdity (95, Note)—When you inform us that it is the duty of every man to believe that HE *is of the remnant of salvation,* you certainly are mistaken (151.)—Tremendous deformity of thought! I O PERISH IF WE DO BELIEVE A LIE, TO BE DAMNED IF WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT!!! (153.) "God cannot, you say, love any but his chosen, nor can *omnipotence itself* make any but his chosen love him" (97)—You say, "that omnipotence itself cannot make a man choose and delight in God." (81.)

I should be glad to be informed in what *pages,* and in what

that I sincerely believe what I write; but it would a spurious kind of candor to acquit me of all blame in the affair. If I have erred, either God hath not sufficiently revealed the thing in question, so as to make it level with my capacity; or else I have not searched after truth with that earnestness and impartiality which I ought.

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lines the above passages are to be found, and what authority Dr. W. had for these imputations.

In the *last* instance, it is true, he has referred us to the *page:* and there are *some* of the words: but nothing of the meaning to be found in page 181. of my treatise. What is there said is, that "Omnipotence itself cannot make THE FLESH choose and delight in God;" and what is there meant by the term *flesh*, is sufficiently plain from page 182.

It is possible this gentleman may exclaim, and multiply words, and pretend to *infer* the above passages from what I have advanced. I do not believe that any one of them can be fairly inferred from any thing I have written. But suppose he thinks they can; in order to acquit himself of falsehood, it is not enough, that, in his opinion, they may be *inferred* from what I have said, they must be proved, the chief of them, to be MY WORDS, and all of them, MY SENTIMENTS; and the places where they are to be found, particularly specified. Any thing short of this will amount to an acknowledgment of the charge; and will require no farther notice in a way of reply.

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REPLY TO MR. BUTTON.

SECTION FIRST.

INTRODUCTION—GENERAL REMARKS, &c. &c.

WHEN the former treatise was published, I did not flatter myself with the thought of its meeting with no opposition. The sentiments there maintained I knew were different from those of many whose characters I sincerely respected. I also knew they had an equal right to examine as I had to advance. Any person, therefore, who might think me mistaken, and should be so disposed, was there invited to point out my mistakes; with the addition of only this single caution, that he would not barely *call* them mistakes, but *prove* them so.

Mr. BUTTON has accepted the invitation. He had a right to do so. He has "attempted, he says, not barely to call the sentiments he opposes by the name of mistakes; but to prove them such, by solid scriptural evidence." I have no objection to his attempt, but do not think he has succeeded in it. The leading sentiments in the former treatise, which are charged as "mistakes," still appear to me in the light of scriptural and important truths. In defending them against Mr. B.'s exceptions, I hope I shall give him no just cause of offence. I am sure it is

my desire to avoid every thing of a personal nature; and to attend simply to the enquiry, *what is truth?* Before we enter upon the subject, however, it will be proper to notice some other things. Although in writing the pamphlet on which Mr. B. hath animadverted, it was my study to avoid wounding the character, or misrepresenting the sentiments of any one, whether dead or living; yet if any thing therein be capable of such a construction, it becomes me to explain or retract it. Accordingly, I freely acknowledge the passage in the preface, page vii. if applied to the body of those from whom I differ, is too severe. I am happy to say, I consider neither Mr. B. on the one hand, nor *Philanthropos* on the other,* whatever be the tendency of their principles if pursued in their consequences, as deserving that censure. I did not mean it indiscriminately of all whose sentiments I opposed, and I suppose the world does not want evidence, by this time, that it is true of some of them. But there is a want of perspicuity in the passage; and I wish it had been omitted.

While truth and justice require the above acknowledgment, there are several other charges, to which they equally oblige me to plead Not guilty. I am accused (p. 4.) of having made a personal attack upon Mr. *Brine;* but I conceive without any reason. I do not think I remembered, at the time of writing, that Mr. Brine had used such a mode of expression: nor are they the express words of any

* *Philanthropos* also complained of this passage, page 9.

author, though it is a manner of speaking which hath been too frequently used. However, suppose I had it in recollection, and purposely omitted the mentioning of any name, surely a censure passed upon a certain mode of speaking, though exemplified *nearly* in the words of some one author, is yet far enough off from a personal attack; and I should suppose the omission of the name would render it farther.

Ought I to be accountable for it, if any persons have said, that "this book will cure some of their *Gillism*, and *Brineism?*" (pref. p. v.) I have a high opinion of the respectable characters alluded to. At the same time the successors of those worthy men ought not to set them up as the standards of orthodoxy. In some things they differed from one another; and on this subject, from almost all who had gone before them, from hundreds of men whom they loved, and whom they knew to be their equals in piety and respectability. Yea, in some parts of *this controversy* they took different grounds. Though Mr. *Brine* maintained the argument from Adam's incapacity to believe, yet Dr. *Gill*, when contending with the Arminians, gave it up.* But they were great and upright men, and thought for themselves; and it is to be hoped others may do the same.

Mr. B. blames me for desiring people to read my book. (p. 6.) I only desired they would read it

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* Cause of God and Truth, part iii. ch. 3. § 6.

before they condemned it. And what law is that which will condemn a man before it hears him?

I am accused (p. 103.) of seeming to avail myself of the numbers I have on my side; but whoever reads p. 178. of my treatise will perceive, that I there found my argument, not upon the number of those who have been on my side, but upon the great works which God hath wrought by them. These all went forth in the use of "precepts, prohibitions, and promises," which, the author of the *Further Enquiry*, whom I was there opposing, represents as irreconcileable with the covenant of grace.

Truth obliges me to repeat what I asserted, p. 109, that the main objections against us originated with *Arminius* or his followers. But I do not thereby insinuate, as Mr. B. says I do (75.) "that all who oppose my ideas of faith are *Arminians*."

I speak with the greatest sincerity when I say I have a high esteem for Mr. B. and many others of his sentiments. I do not account them as adversaries, but as brethren in Christ, as fellow-labourers in the gospel; and "could rejoice, as was said before, to spend my days in cordial friendship with them." The most cordial friendship, however, does not require us to suppress what we believe to be a part of our sacred commission, but rather to endeavour to *speak the truth, in love.*

Having said thus much in my own defence, I shall now proceed to make a few *general* remarks upon Mr. B.'s publication.

In the first place, I think it cannot fairly be called

an answer to my treatise, were there no other reason, than that, although something is said concerning most of the leading topics in dispute, yet the main arguments under those topics are frequently left unnoticed. This will appear to any person, who will inspect the contents of both performances, and compare what each has advanced under every topic.

Farther, Mr. B. has taken great pains to prove a number of things which I never thought of denying. Thus he labours to convince us that faith is the gift of God—the effect of spiritual illumination—that the apostle, in 2 Thess. ii. 13. meant such a faith as is connected with sanctification of the spirit (12.) that God has decreed only to punish for *sin*, for the breach of his commands (88.)—that Christ's obedience was gloriously superior to that of Adam (78.) —that human depravity shall not prove an absolute bar to an elect soul's believing (60.)—that supreme love to God would not lead a heathen to embrace Christ in any sense, because Christ is not revealed even in an external manner. (85.) Since my sentiments are the same as Mr. B.'s respecting these things, his labour in proving them seems to me to be lost.

The far greater part of Mr. B.'s *quotations* I heartily approve. They are in no wise contradictory to what I have advanced. Many others, particularly from Dr. *Owen*, which seem to be contrary, would be found otherwise, if the connexion and scope were consulted. But it is easy to foresee, that a particular discussion of this kind would lead off from the

point in hand, and spin out the controversy to an unnecessary length. I shall, therefore, treat all that is said as if it were Mr. B.'s own; and no farther attend to any quotations, than as they contain argument which requires to be considered.*

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* I ought to observe that although *Calvin, Perkins, Goodwin, Owen, Charnock, Bunyan, Maclaurin,* and others are amongst the number of Mr. B.'s authorities, they are all decided against him in the main point in debate. Indeed I believe no writer of eminence can be named before the present century, who denied it to be the duty of men in general to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls.

I think Mr. *Hussey* was the first person, who by the general tenor of his writings laid the foundation for this sentiment. And yet even Mr. *Hussey* did not, that I recollect, expressly avow it. On the contrary, he allowed it to be "the *duty* of those who were not effectually called, to *hear spiritually*, and *open their Hearts to Christ;* though, as he justly asserted, the preaching of this as their duty would not effect a *cure*." Operations of Grace, p. 442.

Mr. *Hussey* was doubtless a man of considerable eminence in some respects. Mr. *Beart*, in his *Eternal Law and Everlasting Gospel*, I think has given as fair and as candid an account of his writings as could well be given. But Mr. Hussey, though in some respects a great man, was nevertheless possessed of that warm turn of mind, which frequently misleads even the greatest of men, especially in defending a favourite sentiment.

Mr. *Brine* is the only writer of eminence who has expressly defended the sentiment. Dr. Gill took no active part in the controversy. It is allowed that the negative side of the question was his avowed sentiment, and this appears to be implied in the general tenor of his writings. At the same time it cannot be denied, that when engaged in other controversies, he frequently argued in a manner favourable to our side; and his writings contain various concessions on this subject, which if any one

It seems to me that Mr. B. very frequently confounds the *thing* with the *cause* which produces it, and hereby loses himself and the argument in a maze of obscurity. This seems especially to be the case when he enters upon the subject of that *spiritual life* which we derive from Christ.* If Mr. B. means that spiritual dispositions are not duties, considered as *under the idea of blessings*, that is what I have all along asserted. But if he mean that nothing can be our duty which is derived from Christ, and is a new-covenant blessing, then he not only asserts that which is irreconcileable with the prayers of the godly in all ages, who have ever prayed for *grace* to perform what they acknowledged to be their *duty;* but also contradicts his own sentiments. He allows that the principle of grace in believers is a conformity to the *law*, though not to the *law only*. (68.) Be it so; *so far* then as it is a conformity to the law, *so far*

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else had made them, would not be much to the satisfaction of our opposing brethren. However they may be inclined to represent us as verging toward Arminianism, it is certain that Dr. Gill in his answer to Dr. Whitby, the noted Arminian, frequently makes use of our arguments, nor could he easily have gone through that work without them. (See his Cause of God and Truth, part I. p. 63, 69, 118, 159, 160, 165. Part II. p. 88, 211, 215, 222, 226. First edition.) And the very title of Mr. Brine's chief pamphlet against our sentiment, which he called, *Motives to Love and Unity among* Calvinists *differing in Opinion*, as well as the most explicit acknowledgments therein contained, might teach those who pay any deference to his judgment, not to claim to themselves the title of Calvinists, exclusively.

* See pages 12, 28, 70, 91.

it was always incumbent upon us; and yet I hope Mr. B. will not deny that our conformity to the law is derived from Christ, is a new-covenant blessing, and is wrought in the believer's heart by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Whether I have been so unhappy as at times to express myself in a manner not sufficiently explicit, or whether Mr. B. has been wanting in calm and close attention; so it is, that he sometimes proceeds upon a total misunderstanding of the argument. This will appear to an attentive reader, if he please to compare pages 10, 11, of mine, with 12, 13, of his remarks—and 59, 60, with 54—also 131, with 89, concerning Adam.

The places are too numerous to recite, wherein principles appear to me to be *assumed* instead of being proved, and conclusions to be drawn from premises which are themselves the very subject in debate. Thus we are told, "Pharaoh had an express *command* to let the people go," therefore it was his duty to have complied—(88.) Very well; what then? Mr. B.'s meaning must be to add, "but there is no express command to believe in Christ," therefore, &c. I answer, that this is begging the question. I suppose there *is* such a command; but whether there is or no, the contrary ought not to be taken for granted.

Mr. B. does not fail to make, his *own reasonings*, and *observations*, in one place, the data of his conclusions in another. Thus we are told, "There is no command for special faith, AS WE HAVE ENDEA-

VOURED TO PROVE; *therefore* no one shall be condemned for the want of it." (89.) Again, in the same page, "Adam had not faith or any other spiritual disposition, AS I HAVE ALREADY OBSERVED; *therefore*," &c.—But passing general remarks, let us follow Mr. B. in what he has advanced under each of the particular topics in debate.

SECTION SECOND.

ON THE NATURE, AND DEFINITION OF FAITH.

I HAVE the happiness to find Mr. B. agreeing with me, that faith in Christ is not a persuasion of our interest in him. But though he agrees with me in this point, yet he is far from being satisfied with the definition I have given. He objects that it makes no mention of "supernatural illumination and assistance," (12.) and proposes one that shall include those ideas. If by this he only means to maintain, that the Holy Spirit is the sole *author* or *cause* of faith, no one, I should think, who has read my former treatise, can entertain a doubt of my maintaining the same doctrine.

But though this is a truth which I verily believe, yet I must still be excused from thinking it necessary to a *definition*. Definitions are designed, I appre-

hend, to express the *nature*, and not the *causes* of things. Thus if *man* were to be defined, a rational creature, created of God, the last part of the definition would be superfluous.

What Mr. B.'s ideas of faith are, it is difficult to learn. Mr. *Brine* says, "Acting faith is no other than suitable thoughts of Christ, and a hearty choice of him as God's appointed way of salvation"—and Mr. *Button* says, "I do think that every man is bound cordially to receive, and heartily to approve of the gospel." (49.) But it seems special faith is something distinct from all this, so distinct that this has "nothing to do" with it; (54.) yea, so distinct, that a person may do all this; and yet perish everlastingly. And yet it is not a believing of our interest in Christ: what then is it? Mr. B. tells us what is its *cause*, and what its *effects;* but what the thing *itself* is we are yet to learn.

Sometimes I think I can understand him; but I am soon again at a loss. "It is such a reception of the truth, says he, as transforms the soul into the image of Christ." (49.) Very well: then it seems it is a reception of the truth after all; such a reception as is productive of real and transforming effects. This is the very thing for which I plead. Yes, but "a person may cordially receive the truth, and yet not be transformed into the image of Christ." (18.) Indeed? Then how are we to distinguish true faith from that which is counterfeit, or partial? According to this, there is no difference as to the thing itself, only a difference in its cause and effects.

But did not "Christ's hearers at *Nazareth*, and the stoney-ground hearers cordially receive the truth?" (18.) I answer, no; the latter did not *understand* it,* and therefore could not cordially receive it: and as to the former, they gazed upon the Lord Jesus, and bare him witness, "that he was right, as Dr. *Gill* says, in applying Isaiah's prophecy to the messiah; but not that he himself was the messiah;" much less did they cordially receive his gospel. The scripture declares concerning the gospel, that if we confess it with the mouth, and *believe it in the heart*, we shall be saved; but it seems to me, the tendency of Mr. B.'s reasoning is to prove the contrary.

But true faith "is such a belief as brings Christ into the soul: *that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* (19.) Answer; If by bringing Christ into the soul, is meant his having the supreme place in our best affections, which I apprehend is what the apostle intended in the passage referred to, then what Mr. B. affirms is freely granted; nor is it any way inconsistent with what he opposes.

"Ought sinners to realize truth, Mr. B. asks, *so as to effect their own hearts?*" (21.) This I suppose he thinks is self-evident absurdity. He himself, however, allows it to be every man's duty to love God with *all his heart;* and when he shall inform me how this is to be done without the heart's being affected, I will answer the foregoing question.—

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* See Matt. xiii. 23. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

But is it "our duty to do that which God claims as his prerogative?" I answer, It is God's prerogative to write his *law* in the human heart, and yet every one ought to have that law within his heart; or in other words, to love it with his whole soul. How strange it is that the same thing, in different respects, should be denied to be *God's gift* and *our obedience*. I sincerely wish Mr. B. had attentively considered the arguments which I quoted (p. 86—88.) from Dr. *Owen*. Those arguments doubtless ought to have been solidly answered, before any exclamations were made of the absurdity of making that the duty of men, which it is God's own work effectually to produce.

"Devils and wicked men, it is said, believe the goodness of gospel blessings for *others*, though not for *themselves*." (17.) By their believing them to be *good* for others, Mr. B. appears evidently to mean *advantageous*, or *profitable*; and in that sense there is no doubt but what he says is true: that is no proof, however, that they believe in their real intrinsic *excellency* and *glory*. Cain believed the *advantage* which his brother Abel had in bringing a lamb for an offering, and hated him accordingly; but he did not believe his own condition as a sinner to be such, as that his offering, being presented without respect to the mediator, *deserved* to be rejected. Properly speaking, he did not believe in the *necessity* of a mediator, much less in the *fitness* and glory of such a way of approaching the Deity. The scriptures speak of those who believe not, as *blind to the glory* of the

gospel.* Whatever goodness wicked men believe to be in the blessings of the gospel; they do not believe the life and portion of the godly to be *so* good, as, all things considered, to be preferred before their own.

Mr. B. it seems, thinks "that a man may pursue evil *as evil*." (23.) In this I do not differ from him. Nay, I believe that unregenerate persons, without any exception, pursue evil as evil. If any ask me to explain my assertion, quoted by Mr. B. that "human nature cannot pursue evil as evil," I refer them to the note in the very same page from whence the quotation is taken. Unregenerate men pursue evil, as that which is agreeable to their own sinful inclinations. In so doing, they pursue it as a moral evil, and as a natural good. He who pursues evil considered as moral, acts against his conscience. This was the case with Felix in dismissing Paul. But no one pursues moral evil itself under the notion of its being *unlovely*. The instances Mr. B. has produced do not prove this. People do not take poison, or pursue death itself, under any other notion than that of its being a good. The Gentoo women who voluntarily cast themselves into the fire at their husbands death, are no more in love with death for its *own sake* than we are; but are struck either with the *honour* of so dying, or with the hopes of being the happier hereafter. People are not guilty of suicide, but under the notion of its containing a sort

* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

of good. They consider it as adapted to release them from a burden which they conceive themselves unable to sustain, without considering what follows death in the world to come.

But does not every man "believe that he shall *die*? and yet does he act accordingly?" (22.) To this I reply, Death is more an object of *intuition* than faith. If people did not *see* the death of their fellow-creatures, and had no other evidence that they must die but the testimony of God, they would be as apt to disbelieve that as they are other things. And even as it is, if they realized death, *and what follows*, it would have an effect upon their spirit and life very different from what it has.

Mr. B. produces a number of *quotations*, for the purpose of giving us a better definition of faith than that which he opposes. (26.)—But some of these were never designed by their authors as definitions, but rather as *descriptions* of faith. Those of them which represent it as "such a believing of the testimony of God in the sacred scriptures, as, in a way of trust and dependence, to resign up ourselves to Jesus Christ," do not in any wise contradict what I have advanced. On the contrary, I should be very willing to let the above stand as a definition of faith. Nor have I any objection to have it prefaced with its being "a grace of the Holy Spirit, &c." excepting this, that it does not appear to me at all necessary to introduce the *author* or *cause* of any thing in a definition of that thing.

At the same time I would not wish to contend about words. I therefore acknowledge that it may be of use when discoursing about faith in certain connections, to speak of it in a more large or extensive meaning. That might be the case, for ought I know, with respect to some of Mr. B.'s authorities. But what if they had a mind to bring into their definitions the *cause* and the *effects* of faith; and if another, with a view to simplify the subject, define it merely by what it is in itself considered, without any design however of denying either cause or effect; does it follow that his definition must be defective?

Wherein does the definition of *Coverdale*, *Ferrar*, *Hooper*, *Taylor*, *Philpot*, *Bradford*, *Crome*, *Sanders*, *Rogers*, and *Lawrence*, differ from mine, except in this, that they mean to define not only the thing itself, but its cause and effects? "It is, say they, not only an opinion, but a certain *persuasion*, wrought by the Holy Ghost, which doth illuminate the mind, and supple the heart to submit itself unfeignedly to God." (27.) The thing *itself* they make to be neither more nor less than PERSUASION.

It never was my design to exclude the idea of *trust* or *confidence* in Christ. Whether that be of the essence of faith itself, or an effect which instantaneously follows, I always supposed them inseparable. It was before allowed, (p. 23.) "that it is in this large sense, including not only the belief of the truth, but the actual out-going of the soul towards Jesus Christ in a way of *dependence* upon him, that faith in him is

generally to be taken in the New Testament;" and it was in this sense that I undertook to prove it incumbent on men in general.

Those with whom I contend will allow it to be the duty of every one where the gospel comes, to believe it. I knew this would be allowed, when I penned the former publication. My whole design in the *first part* was to reason with those who differ from me, upon *their own principles*. They allow it to be every one's duty to believe the gospel—I therein endeavoured to prove, that in allowing this, they allow that to be the duty of men which is of the essence of special faith. The arguments used in proof of this, have not, I think, been overthrown. I therefore earnestly intreat Mr. B. and those of his sentiments, to consider attentively the following questions: Can any person truly believe the gospel, and yet perish everlastingly? and can those scriptures, which were produced before in proof of the contrary,* be fairly explained upon such a supposition.

Mr. B. thinks I have mistaken the meaning of John iii. 36, and 1 John v. 20; where I suppose a believing *on Christ*, and a *not believing Christ*, are spoken of as *opposites*, in such a way as implies that there is no medium between them. Mr. B. thinks, it seems, that they are not opposites. (24.) According to what he has said, the criterion of true faith lies in the terms *in* or *on;* for he observes that

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* 1 John v. 1. Mark xvi. 16. Rom. x. 9. Acts viii. 37. See these scriptures urged in my former treatise, p. 29, 30.

"it is not said, he that believeth not *on* the Son, &c. No, it is not for want of *special faith* he is condemned, but because he believes not what he says." (25.) To this I answer, First, The term *on* is used to express such a faith as is not connected with salvation, John xii. 42. Secondly, suppose it were otherwise, and the phrase believing *on* Christ were to be the criterion of special faith, this would make against Mr. B. rather than for him. For it is said of the unbelieving Jews, that "though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not *on* him;"—(John xii. 37.) plainly intimating, that they had such evidence as *ought* to have induced them to believe *on* him. On the other hand, Christ says the Spirit shall reprove the world of *sin* because they believe not *on* me. And contrary to what Mr. B. asserts, men are expressly said to be "condemned, because they believe not *on* the name of the only begotten Son of God. John iii. 18.

Mr. B. before he concludes his fourth letter, throws in one argument against faith's being a duty. "If, says he, this faith be the duty of man, and is required by the law, it is then undoubtedly a *work;* and when the apostle says, "By grace ye are saved, through faith," we must consider him as joining grace and works together." (29.) To this it is replied, every thing required by the law, I should think, is not a *work*. That sacred standard of right and wrong requires a holy state of mind, as well as the exercises of it. But supposing it *is* a work, does not Mr. B. maintain the same? But a few pages

back he quoted several definitions of faith from certain eminent divines, most of whom speak of it as a *coming* to Christ, a *trusting* in him for salvation. Now is not this a *work*, or *exercise* of the mind? And yet we are saved by *grace* notwithstanding; for God does not save us out of regard to faith as our act, but on the account of him in whom it terminates.

A poor invalid, who derives his subsistence wholly from the public, may be said with the greatest propriety to live not by his own works, but upon the generosity of others. This however does not imply that he is not *active* in his applications for relief; or that every such application may not in some sense be called a *work*. Yet it plainly appears he does not live upon his applications considered as *acts* or *exercises*, but upon what, through those means, he freely receives; and it would be contrary to the common use of language to say, that he lived partly by grace, and partly by works.

Before I conclude this section, it may not be amiss to drop a few additional thoughts concerning the defining of faith, which however have no immediate reference to Mr. B. but are merely added with a view, if it might be, to throw some farther light upon the subject.

1. Faith, in its most general sense, signifies a credit of *some testimony*, whether that testimony be true or false.

2. When we speak of the *faith of the gospel*, as a belief of the *truth*, it is not to be understood of *all*

kinds of truth; nor even of all kinds of *scripture* truth. A true believer, so far as he understands it, *does* believe all scripture truth; and to discredit any one truth of the bible, knowing it to be such, is a damning sin: but yet it is not the credit of a chronological or historical fact, for instance, that denominates any one a true believer. The peculiar truth, by embracing of which, we become believers in Christ, is *the gospel*, or the *good news* of salvation through his name. The belief of this *implies* the belief of other truths; such as the goodness of God's government as the law-giver of the world, the evil of sin, our lost and ruined condition by it, our utter insufficiency to help ourselves, &c.; but it is the soul's embracing, or falling in with the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that peculiarly denominates us true believers.

3. True faith *includes a spiritual* understanding of the glory of the gospel, but it includes *something more*. It does not appear to me to have its seat barely in the understanding, but in the whole soul. It is the whole soul's yielding up its own false notions and dependencies, and falling in with God's way of salvation by Jesus Christ. By a spiritual discernment of the glory of the gospel, we *see the Son*, and by the whole soul's concurring with it, we *believe in him*. It is with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness. If it is said the *heart* here is not opposed to the understanding, but to the *mouth*, with which confession is made unto salvation—I answer, this is true; but then neither is it used, I ap-

prehend, for the understanding, to the exclusion of the affections; but for the whole soul in distinction from the mouth, by which our faith is openly professed.

4. Though true faith does not include an *assurance* of our interest in Christ, as I attempted to prove in my former treatise, yet it is ever attended with an *application* of the truths of the gospel to our own particular cases. "When the scriptures teach, says the excellent Mr. *Downame*, we are to receive instruction, for the enlightening of our own minds; when they admonish, we are to take warning; when they reprove, we are to be checked; when they comfort, we are to be cheared and encouraged; when they command any grace, we are to desire and embrace it; when they command any duty, we are to hold ourselves enjoined to do it; when they promise, we are to hope; when they threaten, we are to be terrified, as if the judgment were denounced against us; and when they forbid any sin, we are to think that they forbid it unto us. By which application, we shall make all the rich treasures contained in the scriptures wholly our own, and in such a powerful and peculiar manner enjoy the fruit and benefit of them, as if they had been wholly written for us, and for none other else besides us." Guide to Godliness, p. 647.

These observations may be considered as an addition to what was written before; and I believe they will be found to be perfectly consistent with it.

SECTION THIRD.

CONTAINING A REPLY TO MR. B.'S V. AND VI. LETTERS, WHEREIN HE REMARKS ON THOSE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHERE FAITH IS SUPPOSED TO BE COMMANDED OF GOD.

TO prove that faith in Christ is the duty of unconverted sinners, divers passages of scripture were produced which represent it as the *command* of God. In answer to these Mr. B. observes in general, that commands are sometimes used which do not imply duty, but denote some extraordinary exertion of divine power, as when God said to the Israelitish nation, "*live*, &c." (31.) But are the commands in question to be so understood? Mr. B. does not pretend to say any such thing. He adds,

"Commands sometimes denote *encouragement;* as in Isai. li. 17. *Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem*, &c. Acts xvi.—*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*—and John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*" (32.) Very true; but do they denote *merely* encouragement? Can the idea of duty be excluded? Was it not the duty of the Jews, for instance, when Babylon fell into the hands of Cyrus, and a proclamation was issued in their favour, to bestir themselves? Would it not have been their sin to have neglected the opportunity, and continued careless in Babylon? Was it not

the duty of the jailor to follow the apostle's counsel, and would it not have been sinful to have done otherwise? Was it not the duty of the disciples to place an equal confidence in the testimony of Christ as in that of the Father; and would it not have been sinful to have distrusted him? "These passages, says Mr. B. do not appear *so much* to carry in them the nature of injunctions, as of directions and encouragements." But do they carry in them the nature of injunctions *at all?* or can that idea be excluded from them? It seems he himself thinks it cannot, or he would not have so expressed himself.

Mr. B. now proceeds to consider the particular passages produced. He remarks on the *second psalm*, that "kissing sometimes denotes no more than civil homage and subjection; as in 1 Sam. x. 1. where we are told, that Samuel anointed Saul, and *kissed* him; which was not I presume, says he, a spiritual act, but nothing more than a token of allegiance, loyalty, &c." (34.) I think with him, the case of Samuel's kissing Saul serves for a fine illustration of the passage;* and if Christ had been a *civil governor*, and *nothing else*, then it is allowed that civil homage, subjection and loyalty, would have been the whole of his due; but not otherwise. According to the nature of his government must be the kind of subjection required. If Christ's kingdom had been of this world, or somewhat like what the Jews expected it

* See Dr. Jenning's Antiquities, vol. I. p. 184.

to be, such an exposition as the above might be admitted; but if his government is *spiritual*, then subjection and loyalty to him must be the same.

The comment on Jer. vi. 16. (page 35.) I think needs but little reply. It may deserve to be considered, whether, if the people there addressed had been of Mr. B.'s sentiments, they might not have found some more plausible, and less mortifying answer than that which they were obliged to give. Surely they might have replied, "stand in the ways and *see?* we have not a capacity for spiritual *discernment*. Ask for the good old way, and *walk* therein? it was never *discovered* to us. All that we are obliged to is diligently to attend public ordinances, and this we have done from our youth up; what more would the prophet have?" But these were sentiments, it seems, of which they had never heard. They were obliged, therefore, to speak out the honest though awful truth, WE WILL NOT WALK THEREIN.

John xii. 36. *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* "These, it is said, are evidently words of direction to enquiring people." (37.) That they were enquiring people, is true; but not such as enquired from any thing of a right spirit, which is what Mr. B. must mean to suggest. They are called *the people* (v. 34.) in distinction from the *Greeks* who wanted to see Jesus;* and it immediately follows what sort of people

* See Dr. *Gill* on verse 34.

they were—"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet *they believed not on him:* that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, &c."

Lest the foregoing remark should not suffice, it is supposed that the passage may speak only of such a believing as falls short of special faith. (38.) But unless it can be proved that the phrase *children of light* is ever used of any but true believers, this supposition is inadmissible.

Mr. B. speaks frequently of Christ's addresses being by way of "*ministerial direction.*" Be it so. I do not see how this alters the case, unless we could suppose that Christ, as a preacher, *directed* people to a way in which it was not their duty to walk. In short, if there were never another passage in the bible besides the above, that were, in my opinion, sufficient to prove the point contested.

John vi. 29. *This is the work of God*, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. From the connexion of this passage it was observed that the phrase *work of God* could not be understood of a work which God should *work in* them, but of a work which he *required of* them.* Mr. B. however takes it in the

* The reader is desired to observe, I never denied but constantly maintained, that faith, wherever it exists, *is* the effect

first sense, and thinks it "very clear and plain, from the whole context, that this special faith is no duty." (41.) To which I only say, that which appears so *plain* to Mr. *Button*, did not appear so to Mr. *Brine*. Mr. *Brine*, it seems, felt difficulties where Mr. *Button* feels none. Though he agrees with Mr. *Button*, that special faith is not a duty, yet he undoubtedly felt a difficulty in the passage in question. He felt the force of that remark, that the meaning of the answer must be determined by that of the question; and he did not suppose, when they asked, what shall we do that we may work the works of God? that they were enquiring what they must do that they might work such works as were peculiar to an arm of omnipotence. Mr. *Brine*, therefore, never pretended to understand it of a work which should be *wrought in* them, but of an ACT ACCEPTABLE, AND PLEASING TO GOD."*

Dr. *Gill*, in his *Cause of God and Truth*, (part I. page 154.) understands the passage as speaking of such a faith as is not connected with salvation. Mr. *Brine* never pretended to this, but allows it to speak of special faith. The *Doctor*, however, does not suppose that the *work of God* means a work that was to be wrought in them, but a work that was required

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of divine influence, as is every thing else in us, which is truly good: but I as well maintain, that it is man's duty; and that *this* passage means the latter and not the former.

* Motives to Love and Unity, p. 42.

of them. He there explains it, not of an operation of God, but of what was enjoined by his "*will* and *commandment*."

But Mr. *Button* thinks it "strange, if faith in Christ were the *first* great duty incumbent upon them, that they should *first* be directed to labour for that which should endure to everlasting life, as they were in verse 27." (p. 40.) It is replied, Labouring for that which should endure to everlasting life, *includes* faith in Christ, that being the only way in which eternal life can be obtained; and it is no unusual thing first to lay down a *general* direction, and then proceed to that which is more *particular*.

John v. 23. *It is the Father's will that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*. As Mr. B. has not thought proper to answer what was advanced from this passage, it need only be replied, that according to his sense of it, Christ ought to be honoured in one character, but not in another. (42.)

As to what is said of Isai. lv. 6. (the 7th verse I observe is passed over) that "*Arminians* have quoted it"—(42.) what is that to the purpose? It has some meaning; and one should suppose the Arminians quoting it has not destroyed that meaning. Mr. B. must excuse me in not being satisfied with a *part* of an exposition upon it from Dr. *Gill*. The whole of the Doctor's words I observe are not quoted. *Abundant pardon* was never promised to such an attendance, as this quotation makes to be their duty.

Simon Magus was exhorted to pray for *the pardon*

of sin. Mr. B. asks, "who denies it?" (43.) I answer, many who deny that faith is the duty of the unregenerate, deny that it is their duty to pray at all; and especially to pray for *spiritual blessings*, such as the forgiveness of sin. I rejoice, however, that Mr. B. is not of that sentiment.

But it was asked, in *whose name* ought Simon to have prayed for that blessing? To this we have received no answer. It was likewise asked, whether spiritual blessings ought to be sought in the only way in which they can be found, or in any other? In answer to this, we are told, "They may be sought after in the use of means without special faith; and that is all which is here exhorted to." Is Mr. B. sure of that? If so, Simon was barely exhorted to do as Cain did; to bring an offering without respect had to the great atonement for acceptance; to do that by which it was impossible to please God. After all, are we to understand Mr. B. that sinners ought not to seek spiritual blessings *in the name of Christ*, but *in some other way?* Surely he will not affirm this; and yet I do not see how he can avoid it.

But we are told, that Simon was not exhorted to "find, or get pardon of sin, but to pray for it." This is true, but not to the purpose. Faith in Christ is not the finding or getting of pardon, but the *means* of obtaining it. We *come* to Christ that we may have *life*. The one is the way in which we find or enjoy the other. This is farther confirmed by the passage which we shall next consider.

Rom. ix. 31, 32.—*Because they sought it not by faith*, &c. "By faith here is meant, says Mr. B. not the grace, but the doctrine of faith, the gospel, as appears clearly by its being opposed to the *law*." (43.) Suppose it were so, seeking righteousness by the gospel in opposition to the law, would amount to the same thing as the other. But this is not the case: faith is not here opposed to the *law*, but to the *works* of the law; and is therefore here to be understood of the right way of seeking righteousness, which is *in the name of Christ*.

Concerning those passages which exhort men to put their *trust* in the Lord, Mr. B. remarks, that "Trust is a natural duty; but what, he asks, has this to do with evangelical trust?" (44.) Why did he not answer what was said on that subject, in page 46? Why did he pass over that dilemma? As to what he says on the *fourth psalm*, that the persons there addressed were "good men"—(45.) it is replied, they certainly were wicked who are addressed in verse the 22d; and there is no notice given in any part of the psalm of a change of persons.——To understand *sacrifices of righteousness*, of sacrifices *righteously obtained*, appears to me to be putting a low sense upon the phrase, and what I think is not at all countenanced by similar phraseology in scripture. The same mode of speaking occurs in Deut. xxxiii. 19. and in Psalm li. 19. neither of which passages can well be thought to mean barely, that the sacrifices should not be obtained by robbery.

Mr. B. thinks, it seems, that that declaration, "Whosoever will, let him come," is not indefinite, but limited, and so is not a warrant for any sinner to come to Jesus Christ. "All, says he, have not a *will*, therefore it is not a warrant for every man." (46.) That multitudes of men are unwilling to forego self-will, self-conceit, and self-righteousnes, and to venture their souls wholly upon the Lord Jesus, is a melancholy fact; but to conclude from *thence*, that they have no warrant so to do, is a very extraordinary species of reasoning. If, "whosoever will, let him come," be not an indefinite mode of expression, Mr. B. should have pointed out what sort of language should have been used for such a purpose.

A generous benefactor in the hard season of the year, procures a quantity of provision to be distributed amongst the poor of a country village—He orders public notice to be given, that EVERY POOR MAN WHO IS WILLING TO RECEIVE IT, SHALL IN NO WISE MEET WITH A REFUSAL—A number of the inhabitants, however, are not only poor, but proud; and *cannot* find in their hearts to unite with the miserable throng in receiving an alms.—Query, Would it be just for such inhabitants to alledge, that they had no *warrant* to apply; or that the declaration was limited, seeing it extended only to such as were *willing*, and for their parts, they were *unwilling?* If it were expedient to give such objectors a serious answer, they might be asked, in what lan-

guage could the donor have expressed himself to have rendered his declaration more indefinite?

If it is insisted, that to make an invitation indefinite, it should be addressed to men simply *as sinners;* it is replied, if that would put the matter out of doubt, the scripture is not wanting in that mode of speaking any more than in the other. "Hearken unto me, ye *stout-hearted and far from righteousness.* I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off; and my salvation shall not tarry. Let the *wicked* forsake his way, and the *unrighteous man* his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." For other passages to the same purpose, I ask leave to refer to page 84, and 85 of the former treatise.

SECTION FOURTH.

REPLY TO MR. B'S VII. LETTER, CONCERNING THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEN TO EMBRACE WHATEVER GOD REVEALS—HIS CHARGE OF ILLIBERALITY, &c. &c.

IT was observed in my former publication, that every man was bound cordially to receive, and heartily to approve, whatever God reveals. A definition of

faith was also quoted from Mr. *Brine*, wherein he says, "Acting faith is no other than suitable thoughts of Christ, and a hearty choice of him as God's appointed way of salvation." And from thence it was argued, that if faith was not incumbent on men in general, then they were right in thinking unsuitably of Christ, &c.

Mr. B. here expresses his "astonishment," and without hesitation charges me with "illiberality." (48.) To this I answer, I apprehended this to be a *consequence* naturally arising from the sentiments I opposed; but never imagined that they who imbibed these sentiments *held*, or *asserted* this consequence: yet, as Paul urged the *consequences* of denying the resurrection, in order to shew the erroneousness of the premises from whence those consequences followed, I apprehended I might do the same. Such a mode of reasoning is universally practised by writers inspired and uninspired. The Corinthians might have charged the apostle with illiberality, and have had, for aught I see, as good reason for so doing as Mr. B. had for charging it upon me. He had said, "If the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen; and if Christ is not risen, then your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins." They might have exclaimed against these consequences, and said of him who urged them, "He *knows* these are sentiments which we never asserted, or even imagined."

Mr. B. instead of exclaiming in this sort, should have *invalidated* those consequences; but this he has not attempted: and unless he will maintain it to be

men's duty to *stand neuter*, (which our Lord declared to be impossible) and neither think nor choose at all in the affair, I do not see how they can be fairly removed. The difficulty stands thus:—"If true faith is no other than suitable thoughts of Christ, and a hearty choice of him as God's appointed way of salvation," as Mr. *Brine* affirms; then, it is either men's duty to think suitably of Christ, or it is not—to choose him as God's appointed way of salvation, or not. If it is, the point is given up; if it is not, then it must be *right* in them, either to think unsuitably of Christ, or not to think at all—either to choose some other way of salvation, or not to choose at all.

It is not sufficient for Mr. B. to alledge, that he *disclaims* these sentiments—that he allows an opposition to God's way of salvation to be sinful; I *know* he does, and it is with pleasure I acknowledge it; but the question is, Is he herein *consistent with himself?* The Corinthians could have said the same in respect of *Christ not being risen;* none of them thought of asserting that, though they asserted what must necessarily infer it. If it is men's *sin* to oppose and reject the Lord Jesus Christ, it must be their duty to choose and accept him; or else to stand neuter, and so be neither for him nor against him.

Much the same might be said in reply to what Mr. B. frequently speaks of as due to the gospel, viz. "a veneration for it." This veneration either amounts to a hearty *choice* of Christ as God's appointed way of salvation, to a being on *his side*, or

it does not. If it does, this implies special faith: for to *choose* that way is the same thing as to be *willing* to be saved in that way, which Mr. B. allows is the case with no unregenerate man; (46.) and to be *on Christ's side*, is the same thing as to be a real christian. If it does not, then I should be glad to know what sort of a veneration for the gospel that must be, which can consist with an *unwillingness* to fall in with its grand designs, and a reigning *aversion* to its great author and object?

What Mr. B. says (49) of "peace being made," and "the work being done," is a great and glorious truth, on which depends all my salvation, and all my desire. I rejoice with him in the doctrines of everlasting love, and the eternal settlements of grace.—But as the covenant between the Father and the Son before time does not supercede a believer's actually covenanting with God in time;* so neither, as I apprehend, does peace being made by the blood of Christ's cross, supercede a peace taking place between God and us on our believing. God, as the law-giver of the world, is represented as *angry* with the wicked every day.—Every unbeliever is said to be under *condemnation*—he is *under the law*, as a covenant of works; and being of the works of the law, he is under the *curse*. On the contrary, those who believe in Christ, are *not under the law, but under grace*—their sins are *forgiven* for Jesus' sake—there is no *condemnation* to them.—God is represented as being *paci-*

* See Jer. l. 5. Isai. xliv. 5.

fied towards them for all that they have done against him.* This pacification, however, is not founded upon their faith, or returning to God; but upon the atonement of Christ, in which their faith terminates: hence, though they are said, being justified by faith, to have *peace* with God; yet it is *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

When I spake of the gospel's "publishing a way wherein God can and will make peace with sinners, on terms infinitely honourable to himself, &c." I had no respect to *terms* and *conditions* to be performed by us, that should entitle us to blessings annexed to such performance. My meaning was rather this, that Christ having obeyed the law, and endured the curse, and so fulfilled the *terms* of his eternal engagement, God can in a way honourable to all his perfections, pardon and receive the most guilty sinner that shall return to him in his name.

In respect of *terms* and *conditions* as applied to faith in Christ, though I believe such faith to be incumbent on men in general, yet properly speaking, I do not suppose either that or any thing else in us to be the condition of salvation; unless by condition is barely meant *that to which the promise of salvation is made*, and *without which we cannot be saved.* In this sense I should have no objection to its being so called; and I should think Mr. B. could have none any more than I. But as it is a term liable to abuse,

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* Psal. vii. 11. John iii. 18. Gal. iii. 10.—Rom. vi. 14. 1 John ii. 12. Rom. viii. 1. Ezek. xvi. 63. Rom. v. 1.

and apt to convey very different sentiments, I had rather express my ideas in other language, than go about to qualify it by an explanation.

Dr. *Owen* does not reject the word *condition*, but puts an explanation upon it, suited to his sentiments. "It is the appointment of the Lord, says he, that there should be such a connexion and coherence between the things purchased for us by Jesus Christ, that the one should be a means and way of attaining the other; the one the *condition*, and the other the thing promised upon that condition, but both equally and alike *procured for us by Jesus Christ;* for if either be omitted in his purchase, the other would be vain and fruitless." Death of Death, b. 2. c. 1. Whatever words may be used, I know of no difference in this matter between Dr. *Owen's* sentiments and my own.

That the gospel is an *embassy of peace*, addressed to sinners indefinitely, and that any sinner whatever has a warrant to apply to the Saviour, and a promise of acceptance on his application, is evident from the whole current of scripture. To oppose Arminianism by the denial of this well-known truth must be an unsuccessful attempt. Instead of destroying, it is the most effectual method to establish it. No Arminian, so long as he has a bible in his hand, can ever be persuaded that the language of scripture exhortations to repentance and faith in Christ, is not indefinite. If then his system is acknowledged to stand or fall with the universality of such exhortations, he will not desire a greater concession. He is

well satisfied of this, that if general invitations speak the language of Arminianism, the bible must be written upon Arminian principles. Such a concession, therefore, tends to confirm him in his sentiments; and I believe such a way of speaking and writing amongst the Calvinists has been more than a little advantageous to the Arminian cause.

God gathers his elect out of mankind by a gospel equally addressed to one man as to another. No one, on his first application to Christ, comes to him considering himself as an elect person, or as having any peculiar privilege belonging to him above the rest of mankind; but every such person applies to Christ merely as a poor, guilty, self-ruined sinner; and if the gospel did not speak an indefinite language to sinners as such considered, he could have no hope. If it is said, Yes, he feels himself a *sensible* sinner, and so considers himself as hereby warranted to apply for mercy—I answer, this is supposing that a person may have solid evidence to conclude himself elected before he has believed in Christ, that is, while he is an unbeliever; than which nothing surely can be more unscriptural and dangerous. The heart of every man who has heard the gospel, either does, or does not fall in with God's way of salvation by Jesus Christ. If it does, he is a believer; if it does not, he is an unbeliever; and has no revealed warrant to conclude himself an object of divine favour. A being *sensible* of our guilty and lost condition is absolutely necessary to an application to the Saviour; not however as affording us a *warrant* to come to

Christ, but as being necessary to the act itself of coming. A right spirit does not give us a warrant to do a right action; but it is essential to our compliance with the warrant which we already have.

Mr. B. thinks I have given a wrong sense to the 5th chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians. (50.) Suppose it should be so, I apprehend the weight of the proposition does not rest upon that passage. I am not convinced, however, by what has been said concerning it; but enough has been said upon that part. If the reader choose carefully to look over the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters of that epistle, and to compare what each of us has said upon it, he may be better enabled thereby to judge of the meaning, than by any thing that can be farther advanced upon the subject.

Mr. B. thinks that "faith itself is not called *obedience*, but that obedience is the *fruit* of faith." (53.) That faith is productive of obedience is readily allowed; but I also apprehend that faith itself is so called. Unbelief in our first parent was the root of all the evil which followed after it; yet unbelief was itself an evil: so it is supposed that faith is not only the root of evangelical obedience, but is an instance of obedience itself. These thoughts are founded upon such phrases as *obeying the truth*, *obeying the gospel*, &c.* which I suppose mean a

* Rom. x. 16. vi. 17. Gal. iii. 1.

real believing it, and falling in with its grand designs.

These passages were quoted before, to which Mr. B. makes no other reply than by barely asserting, that "they none of them prove faith to be an act of obedience, but only shew that obedience is the fruit of faith." (53.) Obeying the gospel, in Rom. x. 16. is supposed by the inspired penman to be of similar import with *believing its report;* but it will hardly be said, that believing the gospel report is not faith itself, but a fruit of it.—"The passage," Mr. B. adds, "in Rom. i. 5. *By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith*, must I think, to every common understanding, clearly appear to point out the grand design of the gospel ministry, which is (through the blessing of the Holy Spirit) to bring men to obedience to Christ, the object of faith, and to the doctrine of faith.' Very true, and we apprehend that faith in the doctrine is that obedience which is required to the doctrine of faith; and that a rejecting of every rival and false confidence, and a being willing to receive Christ, that he may teach, save, and rule us in his own way, is that obedience which is due to him.

Obedience to the gospel, and disobedience to it, are doubtless to be considered as *opposites*. The former is true special faith, having the promise of eternal salvation;* the latter therefore cannot mean,

* Heb. v. 9.

as Mr. B. explains it, (54.) the want of merely such a reverential regard to the gospel as a man may have, and yet perish everlastingly.

SECTION FIFTH.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S VIII. LETTER, ON THE CAUSES TO WHICH THE WANT OF FAITH IS ASCRIBED.

MR. B. here commences a new mode of opposition. Instead of an answer to those scriptures which were produced to prove that *ignorance*, *pride dishonesty of heart*, and *aversion to God*, are assigned as the causes of men's not believing; he has presented us with some other parts of scripture, which he thinks ascribe it to other causes. Such a method of reasoning I should think can have but little tendency to convince a serious enquirer after truth. It will be natural for such an enquirer to say, "supposing Mr. B. to have proved what he has undertaken, viz. that the want of faith is to be ascribed to the sovereign will of God, and that alone; what are we to do with those scriptures which ascribe it to other causes?"

One passage of scripture, under this head, is entirely passed over, (Luke vii. 29, 30.) a passage too that was particularly recommended to the attention

of the *Baptists;* and a number of others are but very slightly touched. All the answer that I can find to what was advanced between pages 66—74, of my treatise, is included in the following passage—" That human depravity, that ignorance, pride, dishonesty of heart, aversion to God, and the like, often prevent a sinner's *attending to the gospel*, which the Holy Spirit useth as a mean to convey faith into the hearts of his people, for faith cometh by hearing, Rom. x. 17. and that these things are of a criminal nature is certain; but what then? Does this prove faith a duty? and the want of it a sin, for which man shall be damned? by no means: so far as human depravity prevails, man is criminal, and the things afore-mentioned prevailing are certain *evidences* of the person's being destitute of special faith; but to say that these things are an *absolute bar to faith*, as Mr. F. does, p. 67. is a great mistake; neither these things, nor a thousand worse things, if worse can be named, shall be an *absolute bar* to any elect soul's believing." (59, 60.)

To this it is replied, If the reader please to review p. 67, of my treatise, he will instantly perceive that I was speaking of what was a bar to *men's believing*, not to *God's causing them to believe*. Christ did not say, 'How can *God cause you to believe*, who receive honour one of another? but how can *ye believe?*' It is granted, that *with God*, all things are possible; but if the pride and aversion of men's hearts be that which renders believing impossible *to them*, that is sufficient to decide the question in hand; and this was certainly

the whole of my design. In p. 66, the very page before that in which is the passage to which Mr. B. objects, I had said, " We know that *blindness of mind* is not such an obstruction but what is overcome by the grace of God IN THE ELECT; but that being removed in the elect does not disprove, but imply that it is a remaining obstruction to the rest." I suppose Mr. B. must have read this passage just before that on which his remark is made; how, therefore, he could so strangely mistake my meaning, I am at a loss to conceive.

Surely Mr. B. could not think the above a sufficient answer to that against which it is written. " Human depravity, he admits, prevents a sinner's *attending to the gospel;*" but will not allow that it hinders him from believing, By " attending *to* the gospel," I suppose he may mean something more than merely attending *upon* it; but yet he cannot mean any thing *spiritually good;* if he did, and allowed that human depravity prevented it, that would be giving up a main point in the debate. I suppose, therefore, he means no more than such an attention to the gospel as may be exercised without any real love to it, or desire after an interest in its blessings. But will Mr. B. pretend to say, that this is all that is meant in the passages to which I had referred? Did Christ barely tell the Jews, (John v. 44.) that they could not attend to the gospel who received honour one of another, and sought not the honour which cometh from God only? Would this have been *true* upon Mr. B.'s principles? Attending to the gospel, in his sense of it,

is what men in an unregenerate state *can* do, and that in the exercise of a proud spirit.——Did the want of *an honest and good heart* keep the three sorts of hearers, in the parable of the sower, from attending to the gospel? So far from this, Mr. B. elsewhere informs us, that the stony-ground hearers "*cordially received the truth.*" (19.) Though I think in this matter he goes too far; yet thus much is certain, that a mere attention to the gospel was not the thing wherein they were wanting.——When Christ blamed the Jews, saying, *ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life;* did he barely mean, ye will not give attention to the gospel? Surely not.

Mr. B. admits that "pride, aversion to God, and the like, where they prevail, are certain *evidences* of a person's being destitute of special faith," but denies, it seems, that they have any causal influence to prevent his believing. And yet, if there be any meaning in words, surely the fore-cited passages must convey the latter idea as well as the former. When Christ told the Jews, *ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life;* did he mean that their unwillingness was merely an *evidence* of their not coming to him, and not that which had any causal influence upon them to prevent their coming? Surely not!

As the above passage, which I have transcribed from Mr. B. is the only answer he has made to my IV. proposition, I cannot but consider it as unanswered. He has advanced something, however, of an *opposite* tendency, which I shall now consider.

It was affirmed, that the want of faith in Christ is ascribed in the scriptures to men's *depravity*. Mr. B.

thinks this position contrary to John x. 26. *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep;* which passage he thinks ascribes the want of faith to "*non-election.*" (55.) To this I reply, on some occasions Mr. B. would make nothing of such a term as *because;* (63.) and were I to follow his example, I might say, it means no more than this, "your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be a certain *evidence* you are not of my sheep." No complaint could justly be made, if the matter were left here; especially as the above are the very words of Mr. *Henry*, which Mr. B. has quoted for a different purpose. But waving this, be it observed, the truth which they did not believe was, *that Jesus was the Christ.* If thou *be the Christ*, said they, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I have told you, and *ye believe not*—the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; but ye *believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.* This text, therefore, if it prove any thing for Mr. B. will prove too much; it will prove that non-election is the cause of that which he acknowledges to be sinful, namely, a discrediting of *Jesus being the Christ.*

Farther, Though Christ's people are sometimes called sheep, simply on account of their being given to him in eternal election, as in verse 16. of this chapter; yet this is not always the case. They sometimes bear that name as being not only elected, but called—as the *followers* of Christ; and thus they are represented in the context; I know my sheep, and am *known* of mine—they *follow* the shepherd, for they *know his voice*—they *go in, and out, and find pasture.*

And in the next verse to that in question, my sheep *hear my voice*, and I know them, and *they follow me.*——All those who looked for redemption in Israel, readily embraced Christ as the messiah, as soon as they heard of him—they knew his voice as soon as they heard it, and followed him; but others, though they were of the house of Israel, yet not being the real people of God, rejected him as the messiah, the great shepherd of the sheep. *He that is of God, heareth God's words;* ye therefore hear them not, *because ye are not of God.** There appears to me a great probability of this being the meaning of the passage.

But suppose a being not of Christ's sheep, here to mean the same as not being of the number of his elect; this can be no otherwise assigned as the cause of their not believing, than as we assign the absence of the sun as the cause of Darkness. Because of God's forbearing to execute vengeance, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do *evil;* but no one, it is hoped, will think evil on that account excusable. See Dr. Gill's Cause of God and Truth, Part II. p. 100, 222. Part III. p. 77. First edition.

Mr. B. assigns man's *natural incapacity* as another reason of his not believing; and says, "sacred scripture *every where* abounds with passages to this purpose." (55.) Well, if this assertion can be made good, something will be effected to purpose. In proof of it, however, no more than *two* passages are produced,

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* John viii. 47.

viz. John vi. 44.—No man *can* come unto me, &c. and 1 Cor. ii. 14.—The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither *can* he know them, &c. 'Tis true, if these *two* will prove the point, they are equal to two hundred; but it were as well not to speak of such great numbers, unless more were produced. To what Mr. B. says on both these passages, it is replied, if the term *cannot* will prove this, their inability, to be natural, and innocent, it will prove the same of the inability of those who are in the flesh, and *cannot* please God; and of those whose eyes are full of adultery, and who *cannot* cease from sin. Mr. B. takes no notice of what was said before on these modes of speaking, but, instead of that, puts us off with barely informing us, that "this is sufficient *for him*," and with asking his reader, "Does not this seem to strike you at once, that our Lord is here representing man's natural inability?" (56, 57.)

Mr. B. thinks I am strangely inconsistent in maintaining man's inability to consist wholly in the evil state of his heart, or *will*, and yet allowing it to be *total*. (56.) And elsewhere seems to wonder greatly at the same thing. (93.) I also might wonder, that one who professes to believe in the *total* depravity of human nature, should object in such a manner. Must not that inability be total, which proceeds from, or rather consists in, total depravity?

If by *total*, Mr. B. means, *unable in every respect*, I grant I do not think man is, in that sense, totally unable to believe in Christ. But an inability, *in one*

respect, may be so great in degree as to become total.* It is thus in things which relate merely to a natural inability. A man may have books, and learning, and leisure, and so may not, *in every respect*, be unable to read; and yet, being utterly blind, he is totally unable notwithstanding. In respect of the inability in question, those that are in the flesh, are totally unable to please God; and yet, their inability lies wholly in the evil state of their hearts towards God; and not in his being so difficult to be pleased, that if his creatures were to do all they ought to do, it would be to no purpose. Men, by nature, are totally unable to love God with their heart, soul, mind, and strength; and yet, as Mr. B. allows this to be their duty, he cannot say their incapacity for so doing is natural and innocent. We consider men as spiritually *dead;* and we consider spiritual death as a *total* privation of all real

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* When we say the depravity of man is *total*, we do not mean that it is incapable of augmentation; but that it amounts to a total privation of all real good. The depravity of the fallen angels is total, and yet they are capable of adding iniquity to iniquity.

I would wish Mr. B. to remember that a moral inability, whether virtuous or vicious, may be *as total* as a natural inability. And also, I would beg him to examine whether he can form a clear idea of a person being under a *moral* inability to perform any action which he *is*, and *always was*, *naturally* unable to perform. For instance, can he conceive of a man born blind as having a violent and invincible aversion to light? I own it appears to me, inconceivable, and it seems equally absurd to suppose that sinners should be capable of *aversion* to a plan of salvation, which was utterly unsuited to their *natural* powers.

good; and this we may do without considering them as destitute of such faculties, as if the state of their hearts were but what it ought to be, would infallibly discern and embrace things of a spiritual nature.

SECTION SIXTH.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S IX. LETTER, ON PUNISHMENTS BEING THREATENED, AND INFLICTED FOR THE WANT OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

IN proof of this point, reference was had to Mark xvi. 16.—*He that believeth not, shall be damned.* This passage had been explained by Mr. *Brine*, as only given the *descriptive characters* of the saved, and the lost. To prove the contrary, I produced a number of threatenings in the word of God, delivered against *sin*, in the same mode of speaking as the above passage is directed against unbelief. Mr. B. thinks that these also are mere descriptive characters; and that if the scriptures used no other modes of speaking, we could not justly infer that the punishments therein threatened were *on account* of the crimes therein specified. (62.) This is very extraordinary indeed. As though from such a threatening as *God shall destroy thee, O thou false tongue*, we were not warranted to conclude that falsehood is a crime, and the procuring cause of the punishment

threatened! If this reasoning be just, it cannot be inferred from the laws of England declaring that a murderer shall be put to death, that it is *on account* of his being a murderer. Neither could our first parents justly infer, from its being told them, the day ye eat of the fruit, ye shall surely die, that it should be *on account* of their so eating!

John iii. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.* In urging this passage, I had grounded pretty much on the term *because.* But, Mr. B. produces another text of scripture where that term is used, and cannot, he thinks, denote a procuring cause. (63, 64.) The passage to which he refers, is John xvi. 27—The Father himself loveth you, *because* ye have loved me. To this it is replied, suppose a word *in* one instance be understood in a peculiar sense, is this sense to be urged as a rule of interpreting that word in other places? If it is, Mr. B. would be puzzled, notwithstanding what he said in page 62, to prove that sin is the procuring cause of damnation. This is the method taken by the adversaries to the proper Deity and satisfaction of Christ.

But farther, I apprehend the term because, even in this passage, is to be taken in its proper sense, as denoting the ground or reason of a thing. The love of God has, I think, with great propriety been distinguished into *natural* and *sovereign:* the former is God's necessary approbation of every intelligent creature, in proportion as it bears his holy likeness; the latter is his free favour fixed upon his elect, with-

out the consideration of any thing in them, or done by them. The one is exercised towards an object while that object continues pure, and ceases when it becomes impure. Thus God loved those angels when holy, who are now fallen under his most awful displeasure. The other not being founded on any thing in the creature, removes not from its object, but abideth for ever. The propriety of the above distinction may be argued from the doctrine of reconciliation by the death of Christ. To be reconciled, is to be *restored to favour*. Now the *sovereign* favour of God was not forfeitable, we could not, therefore, be restored to that; but his necessary approbation, as the law-giver of the world, was; and to that we are restored by the death of Christ.*

The godly are the objects of God's natural love, as bearing his holy likeness. If any man *love me*, says Christ, he will keep my words; and *my Father will love him*, and we will come and make our abode with him. If ye *keep my commandments*, ye shall abide in *my love;* even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. And thus, in the passage, referred to, The Father himself loveth you, *because* ye have loved me. All this may be affirmed without making inherent qualities any part of our justifying righteousness, or in the least injuring the

* The reader will remember, I am reasoning with those who *allow* of the love of God to elect sinners being sovereign and unforfeitable.

doctrine of God's sovereign, eternal, and immutable love to his elect.*

Mr. B's. expositions of divers passages of scripture are founded upon the supposition that nothing more than an *external* acknowledgment of the messiah was required of the Jews. Thus he interprets Luke xix. 27. *Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me*—(65.) and John v. 43. *I am* come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. (85.) In reply to these interpretations, I might refer the reader to what was said before on the *second psalm*, viz. that if Christ had been a mere civil governor; or such a messiah as the Jews expected, then an external submission might have been sufficient, but not otherwise.

I seriously wish Mr. B. to consider the import of his own words, in p. 85. "Supreme love to God, he says, would have led the Jews to have embraced Christ as the Son of God, and the Messiah;—but not to embrace him in a way of special faith." What is special faith, unless it is to embrace Christ in his *true* character, AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES? Surely, it is not a receiving of him under some representation in which he is not THERE exhibited. To receive him as the Messiah, is to fall in with the *ends* and *designs* of his mission; and these were the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners, in a way that

* See Mr, R. Hall's Help to Zion's Travellers, p. 25—41.

should abase his pride, and destroy their idols. Nothing short of this can, with any propriety, be called a receiving him as the Messiah. I believe the scripture knows nothing, and makes nothing of any thing else. He came to his own, and his own *received him not;* but *as many as received him;* to them gave he power to become the *sons of God.** No intimation is here given that there is a third class of people, who neither receive Christ spiritually, nor reject him. According to the new testament, they who received him were true christians; and they who heard the gospel, and were not true believers, received him not.

Mr. B's remarks upon 2 Thes. ii. 10—12. conclude his *ninth* Letter. (65.) Notwithstanding what he has there said, I continue to think that sinners are culpable for *not receiving the love of the truth.* Mr. B. supposes that their not receiving the love of the truth, is only mentioned as an *evidence* of their being the non-elect; though he, at the same time, explains God's sending them strong delusions as giving them up to *judicial* blindness. But it ought to be remembered, that God does not give men up to *judicial* blindness because they are not elected, nor merely from the "sovereignty of his will;" but as a punishment of former sins. I would therefore ask, what is the sin for which the persons in the text are thus punished? The apostle himself answers, *because they received not the love of the truth.*

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* John i. 11, 12.

Farther, I cannot grant that a not receiving the love of the truth *is* an *evidence* of non-election, since it is true of the elect while unbelievers, as well as the non-elect.

In the punishing of sinners in this life, God frequently adapts the nature of the punishment, to that of the crime. Of this, the text in question, is an awful illustration. Because men *believe not the truth*, God sends them strong delusion that they may *believe a lie;* and because they have pleasure in *unrighteousness*, he suffers them to be deceived with all deceivableness of *unrighteousness*.

SECTION SEVENTH.

REPLY TO MR. B'S X. LETTER, ON SPIRITUAL DISPOSITIONS.

BEING about, in my former essay, to prove spiritual dispositions incumbent on men in general, I thought it best, at entering upon that subject, to express my own ideas of the term *spiritual*. It appeared to me, that when applied to the dispositions of the mind, it always signified TRULY HOLY, in opposition to *carnal*. At the same time I supposed my views on this subject might not be universally granted. I

never meant, therefore, to lay them down as the *data* of the argument, but proposed rather to proceed upon undisputed principles. On that account I passed over this part of the subject without dwelling upon it, which Mr. B. calls "giving it up." (70.) The criterion, as he acknowledges, by which it was proposed to judge of spiritual dispositions, was *their having the promise of spiritual blessings.* This was the ground on which I all along proceeded, from p. 82, to 97, trying the matter wholly by scripture evidence, endeavouring to prove, that *those things are required of men in general, to which spiritual and eternal blessings are abundantly promised.* But Mr. B. has passed all this over, and has only carried on what I should think an unnecessary dispute about what he calls "natural and spiritual holiness." Surely he could have but very little concern with that on which I grounded no argument; his business was to attend to that upon which the whole was rested. But instead of fairly discussing the subject upon that ground, he has taken up the whole of his letter in finding fault with my definition of spiritual dispositions, though no other end is answered by it, that I can perceive, than to shew that he is of one opinion, and I of another.

In one part of his letter, Mr. B. gave us some reason to hope, that he would have left this manner of writing, and have come to the argument—"I shall "add no more, says he, on this head, especially as "Mr. F. soon gives it up, by saying, "If this, (that "is, the defining of spiritual dispositions to be such

" as are *truly holy**) however plain it may appear to " me, should not be universally allowed, I may go " upon a more undisputed ground.' Mr. B. asks, " And what ground is this?"—He then answers him- " self, " why, says Mr. F. ' the criterion by which I " shall all along judge of what are spiritual disposi- " tions, will be *their having the promise of spiritual* " *blessings*.' Whether these dispositions be incum- " bent on carnal men let us now enquire." (70.) Thus far Mr. B. in his quotation from mine. Would not the reader now expect that he was about to enter upon a fair discussion of the subject, upon the fore-mentioned criterion, to which he could have no reasonable objection? And yet, strange as it is, he never touches the subject upon that ground; but, though he had said, he " should add no more" upon the other, yet immediately returns, saying nothing but the same things over and over again.

When we come to Mr. B.'s remarks on the capacity of man in innocence for spiritual obedience, we shall take notice of what is here offered in support of a distinction of holiness into natural and spiritual. At present I may reply to some other things included in this letter.

Spiritual dispositions were said to be such as were

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* I suppose it must be entirely by mistake that Mr. B. has represented me (in p. 70) as maintaining the distinction of " natural and spiritual holiness;" and as informing my readers that this distinction " appears plain to me." I have ventured, therefore, to alter what he had inclosed in a parenthesis, to what I suppose he intended to have written.

TRULY HOLY. Mr. B. finds great fault with this, as it might be supposed he would. And yet I see not wherein it differs from the apostle's account of the *new man*, that it is created *after God*, in righteousness, and TRUE HOLINESS;* to which the same objections might be made as to the above. That God is *immutable* in his nature, Mr. B. will allow; and that his *image* must be the same, is equally evident. That which is created *after him*, must ever be the same in one period as in another. If the image of God is not now what it was formerly, it must be owing to an alteration in the nature of his moral perfections. There cannot be two essentially different *images* of the same divine *original*.

Farther, it was said, 'whenever applied to the dispositions of the mind, *spiritual* stands opposed to *carnal*, and that in the criminal sense of the word.' Mr. B. remarks this as a mistake; for, says he, "*spiritual*, in 1 Cor. ii. 14. is opposed to *natural*. The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the *Spirit* of God, &c." (67.) But I apprehend that the word "natural" in this text is of the same import with carnal. To say that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, is equal to saying that the carnal man receiveth them not; or he who, whatever be his acquisitions in science, is under the influence of that corrupt nature, which we all derive from Adam. Having nothing in him which is *truly good*, nothing correspondent with divine truths, all

* Eph. iv. 24.

his vain labour and toil about those truths is to as little purpose as that of the men of Sodom about *Lot's* door. This I take it is the purport of Mr. B.'s quotation from *Calvin*, (p. 58.)

Depravity, though it is, strictly speaking, no part of our *nature;* yet is become natural, as it were, to us; and hence it is common for us to call a carnal unconverted state, *a state of nature;* and the scripture speaks of our being *by nature* the children of wrath. A state of nature in this use of the term is evidently put, not for the state of man as created but as fallen. And respecting the text in question, it does not appear probable that the Holy Ghost would have here used a term to have expressed the nature of man in its purest state, which he every where else, when applying it to the dispositions of the mind, uses to express a state of abominable iniquity.*

Dr. *Gill* says of the law, that "it requireth *spiritual* service and obedience." This I quoted before, supposing it expressive of my own sentiments; but Mr. B. assures me I am mistaken—that Dr. *Gill* meant no such thing. By spiritual service and obedience, it is said, he meant "a serving it with our minds; a worshipping God in spirit and in truth; a loving it with all our hearts and souls, as well as a performance of all the outward acts of religion and duty." (71.)—What was Dr. *Gill's* meaning I cannot tell; nor is it worth while to dispute about it, as

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* See James iii. 15. Earthly, SENSUAL, devilish. Jude 19. SENSUAL, having not the Spirit.

the opinion of the greatest uninspired writer is not decisive; otherwise, I should think he had no such distinctions in his mind as Mr. B. imputes to him. But be his meaning what it might, there certainly is no difference between worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and the exercise of "spiritual principles and dispositions, such as flow from Christ Jesus." Suppose we follow Mr. B. in his distinction of holiness, into natural and spiritual; and of spirituality, into legal and evangelical; a worshipping of God in spirit and in truth must belong to the latter, and not to the former. It must be not only spiritual, but "evangelically spiritual;" for Christ is speaking of *true worshippers*, under the *gospel* dispensation, and they are said to be such whom *the Father seeketh to worship him.* See John iv. 23, 24. The above distinctions appear to me to be more curious than just; but be they ever so just, they will not furnish us with an answer to the argument upon the fore-cited passage.

If I understand what Mr. B. means by a spirituality which is different in nature from that which is evangelical, it is what is so called, not on account of its *nature*, but of the *subject* over which it extends, viz. the *spirit* or *mind* of man. But he should have considered, that when the law is called *spiritual* (which it is only in one passage) it is not in opposition to *corporeal*, but to carnal; just as the principle of holiness in the hearts of believers, or as the *spirit* is opposed to the *flesh.* This was noticed before, to which Mr. B. has made no reply.

" According to Mr. F. it is said, there is no alteration made in religion by the interposition of Christ to be incarnate, and his mediation: no change in the abolishing of the old covenant, and the establishment of the new; no alteration in the nature of our obedience." (73.) I hope the inclosing of this passage in reversed commas, and ascribing it to me, was without design. The passage was taken by Mr. B. from Dr. *Owen* on *The Spirit*, p. 461. He has given us it at large in p. 68. of his remarks. Dr. *Owen* delivered it as containing the sentiments of those against whom he was writing, who held the gospel to be only a sort of new edition of the law of nature.—I must do myself the justice, however, to deny their being my *sentiments*, any more than my words. I have acknowledged the contrary in p. 119. Nor are they so much as *consequences* deducible from any thing I have advanced. Mr. B. might with equal propriety, go about to prove a difference between the principles of the Old and New Testament saints, since the religion under the law is different from that under the gospel, though they agree, as Dr. *Owen* in the same passage observes, in their " author, object, and end." No, Mr. B. will reply, these are doubtless the same. Then we might retort in his own mode of reasoning, if so, " there is no change made by abolishing the Mosaic dispensation, no difference between that and the gospel dispensation; and no alteration thereby made in religion."

But Mr. B.'s arguments and objections upon this subject will be considered more particularly in the two following sections.

SECTION EIGHTH.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S XI. LETTER, ON THE STATE OF MAN IN INNOCENCE; WHETHER HE WAS INCAPABLE OF DOING THINGS SPIRITUALLY GOOD.

UPON this single point of Adam's incapacity to do things spiritually good, Mr. B. rests almost all his arguments. He seems very desirous of taking this matter for granted, and actually does take it for granted in various places, arguing and exclaiming upon the supposition of this sentiment being true, though he knows that will not be granted him. Hence his answer to my reply to the objection on the necessity of a divine principle in order to believing. (94.) If I held Mr. B.'s sentiment in this matter, then I should not be able upon that ground to establish my own! That is the amount of what he has there advanced. Hence also, his exclamations of my imputing *cruelty* to the Holy One; (56, 88, 95.) that is, it would be "cruel and shocking for God to require that which is beyond the powers of man in his present or primitive state"—I grant it,

but that is what I never affirmed. If our principles are charged with absurdity, they should be proved to be inconsistent with *themselves*, or with some *allowed* principle, and not barely with those of our opponents.

I can see no force in the quotation from Mr. *Brine*, (57). wherein a *cannot* and a *will not* in respect of coming to Christ, are said to be distinct things, unless this sentiment is first taken for granted. "We *cannot* come to Christ, he says, as we are destitute of a principle of life; and we *will not*, as we are the subjects of vicious habits." Now I would ask, what is the want of a principle of life, but the want of a holy bias of mind to glorify God? and this is no otherwise a different thing from aversion of heart to him, than as a negative evil differs from one that is positive. The want of a principle of honesty in an intelligent being is no excusable thing any more than positive villany. I know of no answer that can be made to this way of reasoning, but by maintaining that a principle of life is something different from a principle of uprightness towards God; something different in its nature from what man in his most upright condition could possess. If this were asserted, I should no otherwise reply than by asking for *proof*.——In the above argument, this sentiment is assumed as if it were a truth allowed on both sides; whereas, that is not the case. Supposing the notion of Adam's incapacity to do things spiritually good were a truth, to take it for granted in such a manner as this, is contrary to all fair reason-

ing. It is no other than begging the question. But I am not yet convinced that the thing itself is true; and if the foundation is bad, the superstructure must fall.

Two questions here require a discussion, viz. What evidence has Mr. B. produced in support of this, his favourite hypothesis? And what has he done towards overturning the arguments for the contrary?

First, WHAT EVIDENCE HAS MR. B. PRODUCED IN SUPPORT OF THIS, HIS FAVOURITE HYPOTHESIS? The subject we are now discussing is of a *fundamental* nature, in respect of the main question between us. It is the corner-stone upon which the whole fabrick of Mr. B.'s scheme is founded; we have reason to expect, therefore, that this should be well laid in solid scriptural evidence. However some truths may be more fully revealed than others, I should think I ought to suspect that system whose first and fundamental principles are not well supported.

Let us examine what Mr. B. has offered. He apprehends the phrases *new man—new heart—new spirit—new creature*, &c. imply this sentiment, and are inconsistent with that which he opposes. (83.) To this it is replied, the whole force of this argument rests upon the supposition that the term *new* in these passages stands opposed to a state of primitive purity; whereas every one knows that the *new* heart stands opposed to the *stoney* heart, and the *new* man

to the *old* man, which is *corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.**

Farther, Mr. B. thinks this sentiment supported by a passage in Rom. vii. 6. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in *newness* of spirit, not in the *oldness* of the letter." (73.) But his sense of the passage, if it prove any thing for him, will prove too much. He maintains that spiritual dispositions are a conformity *to the law*, though not to the law *only;* (68.) but the apostle says, the law of which he speaks, they were *delivered from*. Yet Mr. B. will not say that we are by grace delivered from all obligation to the requirements of the moral law. To suit his sentiments, therefore, it should rather have been said, we serve *partly* in newness of the spirit, and *partly* in the oldness of the letter.

Whether "the oldness of the letter" be here to be understood of the manner in which the converted Jews use formerly to worship God; tenaciously adhering to the *letter* of their ceremonial law, instead of entering into its *spirit* or design, and of worshipping God in *spirit* and in truth; or whether it mean the moral law in its particular form of a covenant of works, which seems to agree with the scope of the place; it certainly does not mean that for which Mr. B. produces it. The "oldness of the letter" in which they once served, is not here put for that way of serving God which was exercised in a state of

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, Eph. iv. 22—24. 2 Cor. v. 17.

innocence, but in a state of *unregeneracy*. It was *when they were in the flesh* (v. 5.) that this sort of service was carried on to which the other is opposed. It must be such a sort of service, therefore, as could have no *real conformity to the law* in it, seeing that they are in the flesh cannot please God—the carnal mind is enmity against God—is not *subject to the law of God*, neither indeed can be.

It is very common for Mr. B. to apply that which is spoken of man as now born into the world, to man in a state of innocence. Thus he has applied a passage in Dr. *Owen*. (81.) The *Pelagian figment;* that "what we have by nature we have by grace, because God is the author of nature," means what we have "by *natural propagation*," as the Doctor himself explains it, as we are now born into the world.*

I do not recollect any other passages of *scripture* on which Mr. B. has pretended to ground this fundamental principle; *fundamental* I call it, because, as was said before, it lies at the foundation of all his other principles wherein we differ. I wish Mr. B. and the reader seriously to consider whether the above passages convey such a sentiment, whether they can fairly be applied to the support of it; and if not, whether that which lies at the foundation of his hypothesis, has *any* foundation in the word of God.

But Mr. B. though he has produced no other *scriptural* evidence, that I recollect, for the sentiment in question, than what has been noticed;

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* *Owen* on the Spirit, p. 452.

yet has attempted to argue the matter out by *reason*. I had said, 'It appears to me, that the *scripture* knows nothing of natural holiness as distinguished from spiritual holiness; that it knows of but one kind of real holiness, and that is a conformity to the holy law of God.' In answer to this, Mr. B. does not pretend to inform us where the *scripture* does make this distinction, or from what parts of it such a distinction may be inferred; but only asserts, that "there is a difference," and goes about to inform us wherein that difference consists. (67, 68.) Let us now attend to what is there advanced. The sum of the supposed difference is made to consist in *three* things.

1. The one was possessed by Adam in innocence, and would have been conveyed by natural generation to his posterity; the other we derive from Christ, by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Answer, this does not prove them to be of a different nature, but merely to spring from different *causes*, and to flow through different *channels*. Man in innocence enjoyed the approbation of his Maker; so do believers, as justified in Christ's righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. *Divine approbation*, in itself considered, is the same thing in the one case as in the other; but the means by which it is enjoyed are very different.

2. "Natural holiness consists in conformity to the holy law of God;—spiritual holiness to the law and gospel too." Answer, That all holiness is a conformity to some law, or rule of action given by God to his creatures is certain; and if spiritual holiness is a

conformity to the gospel in something wherein it is not a conformity to the moral law, then the gospel must, after all, be a *new law*, or *a new rule of action*. But what necessity for this? If the "pure and holy law of God requires every man cordially to receive, and heartily to approve of the gospel," as Mr. B. elsewhere says it does, (49) then what room is there for the above distinction? A cordial reception, and hearty approbation of the gospel, is the very essence of conformity to it.

3. "Natural holiness was liable to be lost; but spiritual holiness never was liable to, never was, never can be lost." Answer, This proves nothing to the point, unless the reason why spiritual holiness cannot be lost is owing to its *nature* or *kind*, and not to the promise and perpetual preservation of the Holy Spirit. A principle the same in nature, may be produced in one subject, and left to the conduct of that subject to preserve it in being; while in another subject in different circumstances its existence may be infallibly secured by the promise and power of God. It is generally supposed that the elect angels were *confirmed* in their state of original purity. Supposing this to have been the case, that confirmation, though it rendered their holiness, like that in believers, inadmissible; yet it did not, in the least, alter its *nature*. It had not been a confirmation if it had. Nor is there any reason, that I know of, to conclude that the holiness in the elect angels was of a different nature from that which originally existed in those who fell. I have no notion of any principle in my soul that is in its own

nature necessarily immortal. My experience teaches me, that I should as soon cease to love Christ, and the gospel, and every thing of a spiritual nature, as Adam ceased to love God, were it not for the perpetual influence of his Holy Spirit.

That none of the above differences make any thing in proving the point, is equally evident from Mr. B's *own principles* as from what has been now alledged. He supposes spiritual holiness, or the holiness which is in believers, to be a conformity to the *law*, though not to the law *only*. Very well, *so far* then, as spiritual holiness is a conformity to the law, it is, and must be the same in nature as what he calls natural holiness; and yet they differ in all the circumstances above mentioned. That *conformity to the law*, of which believers are now the subjects, and which must have been incumbent upon them while unbelievers, is "derived from Christ as their head, and comes by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and not by natural generation"—neither "can it ever be lost," so as to become totally extinct. These are things, therefore, which do not affect the *nature* of holiness; and so are insufficient to support a distinction of it into two kinds, the one essentially different from the other.

Upon the whole, I think Mr. B. in treating upon this subject has proceeded in much the same manner as when discussing the definition of faith. In order to prove that holiness in the hearts of believers is something *essentially* different, or different in its *nature* from what was possessed by man in innocence,

he proves, or rather asserts from Dr. *Owen*, that it "is an EFFECT OF ANOTHER CAUSE, and differs in the OBJECTS of its vital acts, there being *new revelations* now which were not before." (76, 77.) All this is allowed, and it proves what Dr. *Owen* meant it to prove, viz. that we are not, after the manner of the Socinians, to make christianity a mere revival of the law of nature. It proves that there are "some differences," as he expresses it,* between the life of Adam, and that of a believer; but it does not prove an essential difference in their principles; nor did the Doctor mean it, I should suppose, to prove any such thing.

SECTION NINTH.

THE CAPACITY OF MAN IN INNOCENCE TO BELIEVE, AND DO THINGS SPIRITUALLY GOOD, FARTHER CONSIDERED.

WE now proceed to the *second* question, viz. WHAT HAS MR. B. DONE TO OVERTURN THE ARGUMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT WHICH HE HAS UNDERTAKEN TO ANSWER? Some things he has passed over: he has said nothing, for instance, to what was ad-

* Owen on the Spirit, p. 241.

vanced on the case of *Cain* and *Abel;* or on the difference between an *essential* and a *circumstantial* incapacity in our first parents to believe in Christ. I had attempted to prove, that the spirit and conduct of Adam in innocence, were nothing more nor less than a perfect conformity to the holy law of God—that the same might be said of Jesus Christ, *so far as he was our example*—and consequently the same of christians, *so far as they are formed after that example.* In proof of the *two last* positions, several passages of scripture were produced. On these Mr. B. has made some remarks.

Psalm xl. 8. I delight to do *thy will*, O my God; yea, *thy law* is within my heart.——What Mr. B. says (79) of the *will* of the Father extending to Christ's laying down his life as a sacrifice for sinners, I think is true, but nothing to the purpose. I was speaking of Jesus Christ *so far as he was our example;* but what have his sufferings, "as a sacrifice for sinners," to do in this matter? Was he designed herein to be *our example?* surely not. If the moral law be allowed to be "herein included," that is sufficient. And if this were *not* allowed, since Mr. B. acknowledges, "that the Lord Jesus Christ, throughout his life, yielded obedience to the moral law," and has pointed out no other obedience than this *wherein he was our example*,* the point is given up, and all the questions in p. 78 and 81, are to no purpose.

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* 'Tis true, Christ was our example in his conforming to *positive institutions;* but this is included in obedience to the moral

Jer. xxxi. 33. I will put *my law* in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, &c. Mr. B. thinks the term law here "includes *the law of faith*, or the gospel—and also what the apostle, in Rom. vii. 23. calls *the law of the mind;* and especially as the apostle, when he quotes the passage in Heb. viii. 10, uses the plural word *laws*." (80, 81.) The plural word *laws* in scripture, and in common speech, signifies no more than the different *parts* or *branches* of the same law; and is of the same import with the word *commandments*. I think with Mr. B. each of the above ideas are included; not, however, as so many *distinct laws* put into the heart. For God to *write his law in the heart*, is only another mode of speaking for giving us *a heart to love* that law; and if the law "requires a cordial reception, and hearty approbation of the gospel," as Mr. B. owns it does, (49) then in a fallen creature, to whom the gospel is preached, a heart to love that law must include a heart to embrace the gospel; and a heart to love the law and embrace the gospel, *is* the principle of holiness, called *the law of the mind.**

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law, which requires a compliance with whatever God shall at any time think proper to enjoin; and will hardly be supposed to require a *distinct principle* for the performance of it.

* After Mr. B. has acknowledged, that "the law of God requires a cordial reception of the gospel," it is somewhat surprizing that he should reason as follows:—"If the law commanded faith, in relation to Christ crucified, it must then acquaint us with Christ crucified. It would be an unreasonable law to enjoin an act about such an object, and never discover

An argument was drawn from the term *renewed*, as applied to our regeneration. On this Mr. B. remarks as follows: "I think at the resurrection, the same body that dies will be raised; but I think the state in which it will rise will be more than *circumstantially*, it will be *essentially* different from that in which it was laid in the grave—except corruption and incorruption, dishonour and glory, weakness and power, natural and spiritual, are essentially the same." (83.) So far from this making for Mr. B. one need not desire a better argument against him. He thinks, he says, that the *same body* that dies will be raised:—I think so too, or it would not have been called a *resurrection;* let him only acknowledge that the *same principle* that was lost is restored, or it would not

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one syllable of that object to us." (92.) It certainly would be unreasonable to require faith without a revelation of the object; and where that is not revealed, we do not suppose it incumbent. But if the *gospel* reveal the object of faith, the moral law may require it to be embraced, Mr. B. himself being a judge.—If the law cannot reasonably require faith towards an object which itself doth not reveal, then, what will become of his *natural* and *common* faith in a crucified Christ, which he allows is required by the law? Doth the law *reveal* Christ as the object of this kind of faith any more than the other? Mr. B. cannot say it does. The above quotation, I suppose is taken from Mr. *Charnock*. I have not the *first* edition of his works, and so cannot follow Mr. B. in his references; but if Mr. *Charnock's* meaning were what the connexion of his words, as introduced by Mr. B. seem to represent, it is certainly contrary to the whole tenour of his writings; and I believe no such a thought ever entered his heart, as to question whether faith in Christ were the *duty* of sinners.

have been represented as a *renovation*, and we are satisfied. Let him but allow this, and he is welcome to dwell upon as many differences, as to *causes* and *objects*, as he can find. If this be but granted, all that he can say besides cannot prove an *essential* difference. It is very extraordinary for Mr. B. to suppose that it can. That which is essential to any thing, is that without which it would not be that thing. If corruption, dishonour, or weakness, belonged to the essence of the body, then it could not be the *same body* without them. These cause a difference as to the circumstances and condition of the body; they do not, however, so alter its essence, but that it is *the same body* through all its changes.

What is here advanced does not suppose that "corruption and incorruption—natural and spiritual, are essentially the same." Doubtless they are different and opposite qualities; but the question is, do these qualities cause an essential difference in the *bodies* to which they pertain? If any one were disposed to prove an essential difference between the principles of saints on earth, and saints in heaven, he might easily accomplish his purpose, according to Mr. B.'s mode of reasoning. He might say, "they are more than *circumstantially*, they are *essentially* different: the one are weak, the other strong; these are exercised in believing, those in seeing; these are attended with opposing carnality, those are free from all opposition. Now here is an essential difference, except weakness and strength, faith and sight, remaining impurity, and perfect holiness, were essentially the same?"

If Mr. B. should reply, that he did not plead for an essential difference between the *body* when it dies, and when it is raised, but between the *state* of the body at those different periods; I answer, then what he has said is mere trifling, nothing at all to the purpose. His design was to illustrate an essential difference between the *principles* of man in innocence, and those in believers, and not barely in the *state* and *circumstances* of those principles; otherwise there had been no dispute between us.

The only question, it was before observed, to which the whole ought to be reduced; was this, WHETHER SUPREME LOVE TO GOD WOULD NOT NECESSARILY LEAD A FALLEN CREATURE, WHO HAS THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO HIM, TO EMBRACE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS WAY OF SALVATION? The arguments which were thought sufficient to establish this question in the affirmative, were urged in pages 53—56, and 120—123, of the former treatise. To this Mr. B. has made no other reply than the following: —"Supreme love to God will lead a man to embrace any revelation God makes of himself; but it will not, it cannot lead a man to embrace what God *does not reveal.* Supreme love to God would lead no fallen creature to embrace Christ in a way of special faith, without Christ being revealed, and revealed in an *internal* manner by the Holy Ghost. There is no true believing without revelation, without evidence." (85, 86.) Special faith then, it seems, consists in believing something which is not revealed *in the scriptures*, and of which there is *there* no evidence. Well, if this be special faith, we need have no farther dis-

pute about it; for I shall agree with him, it is what no man is in the least obliged to.

Mr. B. in the outset, the reader will remember, allowed that a believing of our interest in the blessings of the gospel was not essential to true faith; (10.) and yet what is here advanced cannot, one should think, proceed upon any other supposition. His view of the subject, so far as I understand it, supposes that common faith, such as a man may have and perish, consists in believing *no more* than what is *already* revealed in the bible; and that special faith consists in believing *our personal interest in it*. But this being no where revealed in the scriptures, any otherwise than by giving descriptive characters, an immediate revelation from heaven becomes necessary to acquaint the party of his peculiar privilege before he can believe himself entitled to it.

That there is an *internal* as well as an external revelation, is readily allowed; but I apprehend this revelation to consist in the eyes of the understanding being enlightened, and that not to discover any *new truth*, which was never before revealed; but that which was already sufficiently made known in the holy scriptures, and which nothing but our criminal blindness could conceal from our minds. See Eph. i. 17, 18. I think with Mr. *Brine*, that "to imagine that God now affords such light as will enable us to make discoveries of truths not already revealed to us in his word, is REAL ENTHUSIASM, and has nothing to support it in the holy scriptures." Christian Religion not destitute of Arguments, p. 44.

Perhaps I shall be told that Mr. *Brine* made an *internal revelation* the ground of an obligation to believe in Christ.—I suppose he did, when engaged in *this* controversy; but when engaged with a *deist*, in the piece referred to, he probably forgot what in other instances had escaped from his pen, and nobly defended the christian religion from IRRATIONALITY or ENTHUSIASM.*

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* It is somewhat singular, that Mr. B. should charge me with making it the duty of any man to believe without evidence. This nearly amounts to what others have asserted, that I make it incumbent on them to believe a *lie*. The definition of faith, which I have heretofore given, is the *belief of the* TRUTH. If truth and falsehood, then, are the same thing, the charge may be well founded, but not otherwise.—If a persuasion of a personal interest in the blessings of the gospel were what denominated us believers, there might be something plausible in Mr. B.'s mode of reasoning; but this *he* does not pretend to maintain. Dr. *Withers* appears in some places to maintain this idea, and considers faith, as generally used in scripture, to signify "either an *assent to the bible*," as containing the history of our Lord, and other important matters; or else, denoting "the *knowledge, the assurance* of an interest in its present and promised blessings:" (p. 73.) and from p. 153 to 156, he presents us with a long list of scriptures, as if to confirm this second idea of faith; but which evidently only prove what I never thought of doubting, that believers may have a consciousness of their having passed from death unto life, and not that it is this consciousness which denominates them believers. Indeed he himself tells us in a note (155) that a man *may* be a believer without this consciousness. What is it then which constitutes him a believer in that sense which is connected with a title to eternal life? He will hardly assert, that every one who assents to the divine inspiration of the bible is in a state of salvation. And as to

A great deal of Mr. B.'s reasoning tends, in my opinion, rather to degrade a state of primitive purity, than to exalt that in which we are placed through Christ. I cannot perceive that he represents the latter to any better advantage than we do. All the difference is, that he seems to think meanly of supreme love to God, as if it were something vastly inferior to that of which Christians are now the subjects. Thus he tells us, from Mr. *Charnock*, "that a new creature doth exceed a rational creature, *considered only as rational*, more than a rational doth a brute." (85.) True, but is man in his primitive state to be considered *only as rational?* Does he not continue to be a rational being, notwithstanding he has lost his primitive purity? Did Mr. *Charnock*, in the place referred to, mean to represent man in a state of primitive purity as being *merely rational?* "Adam in a state of innocence, as Dr. *Owen* observes, besides his natural life, whereby he was a living soul, had a supernatural life with respect to its *end*, whereby he *lived unto God*." Discourse on the Holy Spirit, p. 240.

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an assurance of being interested in the blessings of the gospel, supposing this were a just idea of faith, he could not be ignorant that I never made it incumbent upon all who hear the gospel: but one should think a man must be a believer before he can be conscious of it, or of any thing in him that is truly good, or possess any well-grounded persuasion of an interest in Christ; and if so, such a consciousness or persuasion cannot be that which denominates him a believer.

SECTION TENTH.

REPLY TO MR B.'S XII. LETTER, ON DIVINE DECREES, THE USE OF MEANS, PARTICULAR REDEMPTION, &c.

THE objection from *divine decrees* is to all intents and purposes GIVEN UP. I had said, 'The destruction of Pharaoh was determined of God to be at the time, place, and manner in which it actually came to pass; and yet who will say that he ought not to have taken the counsel of Moses, and let the people go?' To this Mr. B. replies, "but Pharaoh had an *express command* to let the people go; therefore he was undoubtedly criminal for not doing it—so it may be said of the rest of the instances produced, and therefore these are nothing to the purpose." (88.) I might ask, then, what would have been to the purpose? The very circumstance of an express command, so far from destroying the propriety of the above instances, is one thing that renders them in point. The question here was not, Is *faith a commanded duty?* that was discussed elsewhere;* but CAN *it be such, consistent with the divine decrees?* I undertook to prove that it *could*, inasmuch as the compliance of *Pharaoh* and

* In proof that faith in Christ IS *expressly commanded*, the reader is referred to p. 37—45, of the former treatise, and to section the *second* of this.

Sihon with the messages which were sent them, was a commanded duty notwithstanding the divine decrees concerning them. Mr. B. on the contrary, undertakes to prove that it *cannot*—that to suppose faith in Christ a commanded duty, must clash with the decrees of God. Now, how does he prove his point? Why, by acknowledging that if the command be *express, it may be consistent with those decrees;* that is, in other words, by giving up the very point in question. If I understand Mr. B.'s mode of reasoning, it amounts to what is usually called reasoning in a circle. In the contents it is intimated, that faith cannot be a commanded duty, *because it is inconsistent with the divine decrees;* in the page to which those contents refer, it is suggested to be inconsistent with the divine decrees, *because it is not commanded!*—After all, if the thing itself were inconsistent, no command, however *express*, could make it otherwise.

Mr. B. here, and in several other places, allows that men ought to *use the means*, and be diligently concerned about their eternal salvation, to *strive* to enter in at the strait gate, &c. (88—43.) He has said nothing, however, to inform us how this is more consistent with the doctrine of decrees than an obligation to believe is. But passing this, it is observable, that what one evangelist calls striving to enter, another calls *entering;** and indeed it must appear

* Luke xiii. 24. Matt. vii. 13.

very extraordinary if men ought to *strive* to do that which they are not obliged to do. Farther, using the means of salvation, waiting and praying for a blessing upon them, ought to be attended to either with the heart, or without it. If *without* it, it will be but poor *striving* to enter in at the strait gate, far enongh from the sense of the passage just cited, which denotes such a striving as that of a person in an *agony;* if *with* it, this amounts to something spiritually good, and shall certainly terminate in salvation.

What our brethren can mean in consistency with their own sentiments, by making it the duty of men, to *use the means of salvation*, is difficult to say. Mr. B. will not allow it to be a bare attendance, but "a diligent waiting, and seeking of spiritual blessings." (36—43.) And in the exposition upon Isai. xlii. 18. Look, ye blind, &c. the purport of the exhortation is said to be, "that they (unconverted sinners) would make use of their external hearing and sight, which they had, that they might attain to a spiritual hearing and understanding of divine things." (102.) But a real diligent use of means, always implies a true desire after the end. It is an abuse of language to call any thing short of this by that name. Men, continuing wicked, may attend what are properly called the means of grace; but they never attend them *as* the means of grace. 'Tis impossible a man should use means to obtain that after which he hath no real desire; but a wicked man hath no real desire to be saved from that from which the

gospel saves us. Using the means of grace, therefore, and *waiting* upon God, are spiritual exercises, and have salvation plentifully connected with them in the bible. *Every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.* Many of our brethren who scruple to exhort sinners to things of a spiritual nature, will yet counsel them to *watch* at wisdom's gates, and *wait* at the posts of her doors; but these are as much spiritual exercises as believing in Christ. Those who *watch* daily at wisdom's gates, *waiting* at the posts of her doors, are *blessed.* They shall *find* him whom they seek; and finding him, they find *life*, and shall obtain *favour of the Lord.** The language of wisdom is, *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.*

'Tis true, in some instances, persons are spoken of, not according to what they do, but according to what they *profess* to do; and after this manner of speaking, hypocrites are said to *seek* the Lord, and to *delight to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness.*† That is, they did those things which are the usual expressions of a delight in God, and a desire to seek his face, *as if* they had been a righteous people: but as to the things themselves, they are, strictly speaking, spiritual exercises, and are constantly so to be understood throughout the bible. That manner of seeking God which is practised by hypocrites, will hardly be pretended to be the duty

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* Luke xi. 10. Prov. viii. 34, 35. † Isai. lviii. 2.

of men in general; and, except in those cases, neither seeking God's face, nor waiting upon him, I believe, are ever used in the scripture for such an attendance on God's worship as a man may practise and perish notwithstanding: it is certain, however, this cannot be said of a "*diligently* waiting, and seeking of *spiritual* blessings." To use our external hearing and sight *that we may attain to a spiritual hearing and understanding of divine things*, is not "WITHIN THE COMPASS OF A NATURAL MAN." The *end* of every action determines its nature; to read and hear, therefore, with a true desire that we may attain to a spiritual hearing and understanding, are themselves spiritual exercises. In this matter I entirely coincide with Mr. *Brine*, that "no unsanctified heart will ever pray to God for grace and holiness; but that this is men's *dreadful sin*, and justly exposes them unto *direful* vengeance."*

If to this should be objected the words of our Lord, that "many will *seek* to enter in, and shall not be able"—I answer, what is there spoken respects not the present state; but the period *when the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door*.†

The case of the man waiting at the pool of *Bethesda* has often been applied to that of an unconverted sinner attending the preaching of the gospel; but let it be closely considered whether such an application of the passage be warrantable from the tenor of

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* Motives to Love and Unity, p. 36, 37. † Luke xiii. 24, 25.

scripture; and whether the characters to whom it is thus applied are not hereby cherished in a thought with which they are too apt to flatter themselves, viz. that for their parts, their hearts are so good, that they would fain repent and be converted, but cannot, because God is not pleased to bestow these blessings upon them. No one can imagine that I wish to discourage people from reading or hearing the word of God. God's ordinances are the means by which he ordinarily works; and whatever be their motives; I rejoice to see people give them an attendance. At the same time, I think we should be careful lest we cherish in them an opinion, that, when they have done this, they are under no farther obligations. By so doing, we shall furnish them with an unwarrantable consolation, and contribute to shield them against the arrows of conviction.

PARTICULAR REDEMPTION. I had said, 'If it were essential to true saving faith to claim a personal interest in Christ's death, the objection would be unanswerable.' Mr. B. replies, "But he who has faith, *has* a personal interest, whether he can claim it or not, therefore the objection is equally unanswerable on this ground; for it is making it the duty of all to have that which is an undoubted evidence of a personal interest, whether they have that interest or not, which appears to me very absurd and ridiculous." (90.) Perhaps so, but if the same spiritual dispositions which are bestowed by the gospel are required by the law, which Mr. B. hath scarcely attempted to

disprove, though he has said so much about it, there can be nothing absurd or ridiculous in it.

The matter entirely rests upon the solution of this question, DOES THE SCRIPTURE REPRESENT ANY THING AS THE DUTY OF MANKIND IN GENERAL, WITH WHICH ETERNAL HAPPINESS IS CONNECTED? I only wish Mr. B. had fairly tried the matter by this criterion, and had been willing to be decided by the issue. There is scarcely a truth in the sacred scriptures capable of a clearer demonstration. This was the ground which Mr. B. declined in his Xth Letter, p. 70. In addition to what was said from p. 84 to 96 of my former treatise, I shall now only add as follows—

I hope Mr. B. will allow that every man ought to *love God's law—do his commandments—do righteousness*—be of a *meek*, *lowly*, *pure*, and *merciful* spirit—and bear so much good will, surely, to *Christ*, as to *give a disciple a cup of cold water for his sake*—at least he must allow, he does allow, that men ought *not to be offended in him;* for he himself confesses, "they ought not to *despise* if they cannot embrace him." (96.) And yet these are all evidences of an interest in Christ and eternal blessedness.*

Mr. B. farther objects that I "make faith warrantable and incumbent where there is an *impossibility*." (90.) Well, whenever Mr. B. can find a man, or a body of men, whose salvation he can be assured is

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* Psal. cxix. 165. Rev. xxii. 14. 1 John ii. 29. Mat. v. 3—9. Mark ix. 41. Matt. xi. 6.

impossible, he is welcome, from me, to assure them they have no warrant, and are under no obligation to believe in Christ. In some sense, the salvation of every sinner is *possible:* as no one knows what will be his own end, every man, while in the land of the living, is in the field of hope. And that is all I meant by *possibility*, in pages 133. 134. Mr. B. allows that "inasmuch at we *know not* who are, and who are not the elect, it is the duty of every one, where the gospel of salvation comes, to be concerned, seek, enquire, &c." (88.) But what solid reason can be given for the consistency of this, that will not equally apply to the other? If it be said, "these are things *expressly* commanded;" I answer, this is allowing that IF *faith in Christ is expressly commanded, it may be consistent with the subject in question*, which is giving up the point.

But farther, though I admit that the salvation of some men is *impossible;* it is *certain* that they will perish; yet I conceive it is not such a kind of impossibility as to render exhortations to believe in Christ inconsistent. It is no otherwise impossible for them to be saved, than it was for *Sihon*, king of the Amorites, to have enjoyed the blessings of a peace with Israel. If there is an *infinite* worth and fulness in the sufferings of Christ in themselves considered—if the particularity of redemption does not consist in any want of sufficiency in the death of Christ; but in God's sovereign purpose to render it effectual to the salvation of some men, and not of others; and in Christ's being the covenant-head and representative

of some men, and not of others, then the matter must be supposed to rest upon the same footing with all the rest of the divine purposes. And as it was the duty of *Sihon* to have accepted the message of peace and trusted in the goodness of him by whose order it was sent him, notwithstanding the purpose of God concerning him; so it may be the duty of every sinner to accept of the message of peace which is sent him by the preaching of the gospel, and trust in Christ for the salvation of his soul.

Objections equally plausible might be made to that case as to this. One might say, What end could be answered by a message of peace being sent? Peace was not ordained for him; but destruction, and his country was previously assigned to Israel for a possession; for him, therefore, to have received the message of peace, and trusted in the goodness of the God of Israel, would have been trusting in an impossibility. If told, the purposes of God are a great deep, which we cannot fathom—that if we knew the whole system, we should see it otherwise—that there was no *natural* impossibility in the affair, no *such* impossibility as to cause any inconsistency in it—and that in the present state, we must take the *revealed* and not the secret will of God for the rule of our duty; he might have replied like Mr. B. "True, but God's secret will is the rule of his conduct to us; and surely he has not decreed, by giving *Sihon* up to hardness of heart, to leave him destitute of a right spirit, and then punish him for the want of it—this would be *cruel* and *shocking!*" (88.)

After all that Mr. B. has said, it is evident, from the above manner of speaking, that he does in fact make the decrees of God rules of human action; and herein lies a considerable part of the difference between us. We believe the doctrine of divine predestination as fully as he does, but dare not apply it to such purposes.

SECTION ELEVENTH.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S XIII. LETTER, ON THE TENDENCY OF THESE PRINCIPLES TO ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINES OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY, DIVINE GRACE, THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT, &c.

I HAD observed, that the sentiment I opposed, as well as that which I attempted to establish, 'represented man as utterly *unable* to do things SPIRITUALLY GOOD; but then it made THAT inability to be no part of his depravity, but altogether innocent in its nature.' Mr. B. quotes this passage, not however as I wrote it, but very differently, in sense as well as in words, and then finds fault with that which he himself had inserted. (96.) I never imagined that he would maintain men's aversion to all "moral good" to be innocent—nor even their *aversion* to spiritual things; though I did not suppose he would have allowed that aversion to make any part of their

inability. Mr. B. complains of being injured in that he is represented as maintaining the inability of man to things spiritually good to be altogether innocent. What I affirmed was, that 'the sentiment, when it spake *consistently* with itself, did so.' I think so still; for it appears to me an inconsistency for a man to be "both naturally and morally unable" to come to Christ. Something has been said upon this subject already in the note p. 46. but as this is a subject on which Mr. B. frequently insists, let us examine it more particularly.

In the *first* place, supposing men's inability to do things spiritually good to be partly natural, and partly moral; then; after all, it must follow, that they are *in part* to blame for their non-compliance with those things; and so, consequently, the contrary must *in part* have been their duty. That this sentiment follows from the position of Mr. B. is certain; but whose cause it will subserve I cannot tell: it seems to suit neither. Mr. B. beyond doubt, means all along to deny every thing spiritually good being either *in whole* or *in part* the duty of carnal men. I have attempted, on the other hand, to maintain, that such obedience is not merely *in part*, but *fully* incumbent upon them. And one should think it either is incumbent upon them, or it is not; but the above position implies that it is neither.

Farther, I question if both these kinds of inability can possibly obtain in the same instance. Where there is, and always was an entire natural inability, there appears to be no *room* for an inability of a mo-

ral nature. It would sound uncouth to affirm of any of the brutal creation, that they are morally, as well as naturally unable to credit the gospel. It would be equally uncouth to affirm of a man in his grave, that he is unwilling as well as unable to rise up and walk.

That men are capable of *hating* spiritual things nobody will dispute. But it is impossible that any aversion should subsist to what there is an entire natural inability to understand. We cannot hate that of which we have no idea, any more than love it. A brute, be his savage disposition ever so great, is incapable of aversion to every thing superior to his nature to understand. The same may be said of any being, intelligent or unintelligent.

I may be told, perhaps, that a *poor* man may be of such a temper of mind, that if he had a natural ability to relieve the distressed, he would still be under a moral *in*ability. Be it so, it is not proper to say he is morally as well as naturally unable to relieve the indigent. It might with truth be said, that he *is* morally unable to do such kind actions as are within his reach; and we may conclude he *would be* equally so to relieve the indigent, if his wealth were to increase. But this does not prove that moral inability can exist without natural ability. Besides, the inability of the *poor* man to relieve the distressed, is not *in every respect* total; and so is not of equal extent with that pleaded for in carnal men as to the discernment of spiritual things. No man, however poor, is destitute of those faculties and powers of mind by which generous actions are performed. It is impossible

perhaps to find a man naturally unable in every respect to do good in some way or other to his fellow creatures; or if a man of that description could be found, he must be utterly void of reason, and in that case he cannot be said to be morally, as well as naturally unable to do good.

They who possess great natural ability are capable of being the subjects of greater moral inability and guilt, than others whose capacities are less. It is not in some men's power to be so wicked as others. And where there is, and always was an *entire* natural incapacity, there is no place for an incapacity of a moral nature *in any degree*. Mr. B denies that men either have, or ever had any natural ability for the embracing of spiritual things. We reply, if so, they would be equally incapable of *rejecting* as of embracing them. The *aversion* of the human mind to things of that nature I conceive to be a strong additional argument in our favour; for which argument my thanks are due to Mr. *Button*. The above observations may be considered as a farther reply to the quotation from Mr. *Brine*. (p. 57.)

Can Mr. B. seriously pretend to maintain that his sentiments represent *human depravity* in an equal light with ours? It seems he wishes to have it thought so; but with what colour of evidence, it is difficult to conceive. We suppose men's aversion is so great as to amount to a *total* moral inability; and so as to render divine influence absolutely necessary. But Mr. B. expresses his surprize that we should call this inability *total*. (56, 93.) It seems then, he does not think

the chain of men's native aversion to God and spiritual things is strong enough to keep them from coming to Christ, without having something else in conjunction with it.

But if this cannot be maintained, he seems certain of the advantage, however, in one respect. "We certainly, says Mr. B. lay man much *lower* than he does;" and this he thinks hath a tendency to abase his *pride*, while our sentiments tend to gratify and promote it. (96.) It is true, Mr. B. does lay man *lower* than we do; but it is observable, that so far as that is the case, it is not in the character of a *sinner*, but of a *creature of God;* not on account of what he has made himself, but on account of what God hath made him; and if that is the way in which we are to be humbled, it might be done still more effectually, if we were reduced to the condition of a stock or a stone.

In reply to what is said on the doctrine of *grace*, and the *work of the Spirit*, (1, 93, 97.) little more need be said in addition to the above. Though Mr. B. sometimes speaks of men's inability as being *partly* innocent and *partly criminal;* yet, as was said before, it was manifestly his design all along to prove men *wholly* excusable in their omission of every thing spiritually good. But suppose it were otherwise—suppose they were only *in part* excusable; if it be a more glorious instance of grace, and a greater exertion of divine influence, to save one who is partly innocent, than one who is entirely to blame; it must be upon this principle, that in proportion as criminality

is lessened, the glory of divine grace in salvation is increased: and if so, then the most glorious display of grace that could be manifested in our salvation, must be upon the supposition of our being altogether innocent!

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, says Christ to his disciples, *say we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.* Luke xvii. 10. From this passage two things are observable; *First*, That obedience to God cannot merit any thing at his hands. *Second*, The reason why there is no such thing as merit in our obedience, is, that all the good we have done, or may do, is *commanded*, is our *duty*. From hence it follows, 1. That the very idea of *duty*, excludes merit, and cuts off boasting. 2. That the more attached we are to our duty, as such, the more distant we are from all pretence to merit or boasting. The very way to extirpate the notion of human merit, is to consider all which we do as being our *duty*. 3. That if it were possible to perform any thing which does not come under the idea of duty, then would there be some ground for merit. If the foregoing observations be just, it scarcely needs asking which sentiment it is that cuts off boasting, that of faith being considered as a *duty*, or the opposite.

Perhaps it may be said in answer to this, that when a man is enlightened by the Spirit of God, it is then his duty to believe. But I think if it be not incumbent before, it will not be difficult to prove it so at all. In this case the work of the Spirit upon the heart

must constitute the ground of duty; and then it is necessary that the person should *know* that he is the subject of this work before he can see it his duty to believe. But by what evidences can he obtain this knowledge? Surely not by his impenitency and unbelief; and yet, till he has repented and believed, he can have nothing better.

If it be, as Mr. B. represents, the work of the Spirit must consist in giving us *new natural powers*. If we have no natural power to embrace spiritual things till we are regenerated, then regeneration must be the creation of natural power. And what this is different from creating a *new soul*, is difficult to determine. Be that as it may, the creating of natural power cannot be a spiritual exertion, any more than the creation of a leg or an arm; and so cannot be reckoned amongst the special spiritual operations of the Holy Ghost. Whatever *grace* there may be in it, it is no part of the grace of the *gospel;* it is no part of *salvation*. It is not any thing that became necessary through *sin*, for it is supposed that man was as destitute of it in his created, as in his fallen state. One should think, therefore, it can be nothing which is given us *in behalf of Christ*, *as mediator;* or for which we shall have to praise him in *that* character to eternity.

Amongst a catalogue of other bad consequences imputed to my sentiments, they are said to be "distressing to saints." (105.) This, for aught I know, may be just. They certainly have a tendency to convince both saint and sinner of abundance of sin,

which the sentiments here opposed make to be no sin. It is no wonder, therefore, that true saints, by discerning their great obligations, both before and after conversion, to love the Lord Jesus Christ; should now be greatly distressed in a way of godly sorrow. Looking upon him whom they pierced, they mourn, as one that is in bitterness for his first born. But this, so far from being brought as an objection, ought to be considered as a corroboration. That which tends to sooth and quiet the minds of men, by giving diminutive representations of the causes of reflection and grief, is not the gospel. The gospel gives *peace* which passeth all understanding; and this is consistent with the exercise of the most pungent grief: but that quietness of mind which rises from a diminution of blame-worthiness, rather deserves the name of *ease* than peace, and is much more to be dreaded than desired.

It was acknowledged in the former treatise, 'that many who have dealt in addresses to unconverted sinners, have dabbled in Arminianism.' Mr. B. from hence repeatedly represents me as acknowledging that they *tend* that way. (p. 1. pref. and p. 100.) This I must beg leave absolutely to deny. There is no such acknowledgment, nor any thing like it, but the very reverse. Mr. B. cannot be ignorant that many who have maintained the doctrines of grace, have more than dabbled in Antinomianism; and yet that is no proof that the doctrines of grace are really of that *tendency*.

As to the use that is made of my concession concerning the *manner* of addressing sinners, such as "come to Christ, now, this moment, &c." (99.) I might refer the reader for answer to the passage itself; yea, to that part of it which Mr. B. has quoted. Surely he had no reason to conclude that I thought a believing in Christ was a matter that might safely be deferred. He professes to maintain, that men ought to be perfectly holy in some sense or other; but does he ever say to his auditory, "be perfectly holy, now, this moment?"

One remark more upon this subject requires a reply. I had attempted to remove the supposed absurdity of addresses to *dead* sinners, by observing that we supposed spiritual death to be altogether a criminal affair. Mr. B. answers, from Mr. *Wayman*, "It was man's sin to destroy a *moral* life, but it is not man's sin that he hath not a *spiritual* one. It is God's eternal grace that gives life." (102.) To this it is replied, this position requires a higher authority to support it than Mr. Wayman.* If we admitted this sentiment as true, then, it is granted, our manner of address to unconverted sinners would be incon-

* "It is not man's sin that he *hath not* a spiritual one."—If spiritual life be what we never had, then we cannot be said to be *spiritually dead*, for death is not a mere negative, but a privative idea. "It is God's eternal grace that gives life."—True, and is it not God's eternal grace that gives to a fallen creature a conformity to his *holy law?* and yet it does not follow from thence that it is not man's duty to have it.

sistent; but we deny it. In order to prove our conduct absurd, it should be proved to be inconsistent with some *allowed* principle, and not barely with the principles of our opponents.

SECTION TWELFTH

SOME SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS RECOMMENDED TO MR. B. AND THE READER.

THERE is great danger in all disputes of running to extremes. Mr. B. thinks my sentiments "the high road to *Arminianism*, (100.) and perhaps to *something worse*. (2) I am not convinced at present of their having any such tendency. However, it becomes me to watch against every thing that might lead me aside from the simplicity of the gospel, be that what it may; and I hope I shall so far take Mr. B.'s advice. I hope also, in my turn, I may be allowed, without offence, to suggest a few serious hints to the same end. Mr. B. seems to think all the danger of erring to lie on one side; (p. 1, 2, pref.) it is allowed there is danger on that side, but not on that side only. In general, then, I wish Mr. B. to consider whether his principles do not tend to lead him farther than he seriously intends to go? particularly,

If, in the course of his ministry, he avoids giving the carnal part of his auditory to understand that God requires any thing of them which is spiritually good, whether it will not be natural for them so to understand it as to reckon themselves not at all obliged to love GOD, *to be truly holy, to be the subjects of any internal religion whatever; and whether they do not in fact so understand it?*——Whatever difference there is between these things in the opinion of the preacher, I incline to think not one *hearer* in a hundred makes any account of it. They understand it of every thing which concerns the *heart*. The generality of those who would be offended with us for enjoining spiritual obedience upon our carnal auditors, would, I apprehend, be equally offended with Mr. B. were he to signify that they ought to worship God in *spirit and in truth*, or to *love* him with their whole heart. Were any thing of this sort delivered, and nothing added to explain it away, it is likely the preacher would be interrogated in some such manner as this.—" How can unregenerate sinners *love* God, or worship him *in spirit and in truth?* You might as well call to the dead to come forth, or bid people take wings and fly to heaven. Their business is to attend the means, and if God please to give them a heart to love him, well and good; but if not, to what purpose are all your harangues about what people *ought* to do? Cease this legal business, preach the doctrines of the gospel, and leave the Holy Spirit to do his own work."

In the above, no respect whatever is had in a personal way to Mr. B. or any of his friends. What is written, is founded upon such facts as have fallen under my own observation; and I suppose that the same causes are usually productive of the same effects in one place as in another.

Farther, It may be well for Mr. B. to consider, *while he professes to allow that men ought to do whatever was in the power of man in a state of innocence, whether his sentiments do not insensibly lead him to excuse men from every thing but what may be done by a wicked mind, without any true love to God, or regard for his glory?*——Mr. B. when asked in controversy, 'whether any internal religion is now required of men towards God, or no?' answers in the affirmative. (72) But is it a matter which his views of things would ever, of their own accord, lead him to dwell upon? I am glad to see the frankness with which he expresses himself concerning the law of God being *exceeding broad.* "If the principles I have advanced, says he, contradict this truth, let them for ever be discarded. (95) Mr. B.'s meaning in this ingenuous sentence cannot be supposed to amount to less than this, that if he perceived his present sentiments to clash with the spirituality of the law, he would disown them; and if he found them to have such a *tendency*, he would at least suspect them. Now I desire in this matter to be determined by *facts*, and by facts that cannot fairly be disputed. I ask, then, In what manner do Mr. B.'s sentiments lead him to EXPOUND SCRIPTURE? How has he ex-

pounded the *second psalm*, and the *sixth* of Jeremiah? What has he made these passages to require more than *external* obedience? Is it not the tendency of all he says concerning the addresses of Christ and his apostles to their carnal auditors, to reduce them to the capacity, not of a right spirit, such as man possessed in a state of innocence, but of an *apostate mind*. Are they not all along made to mean no more than what may be done without any real love to God, or regard for his glory? Is not such a sense put upon Isai. xlii. 18. *Look, ye blind*, &c. as that its requirements shall be "WITHIN THE COMPASS OF NATURAL MEN, WHO ARE INTERNALLY DEAF AND BLIND?" (103)

This is certainly a serious matter, and I hope Mr. B. will seriously consider it. If he does indeed believe the law to be spiritual, and to require internal religion, it is hoped he will on all proper occasions acknowledge it, and not attempt to bring down the precepts of the bible to the dispositions of an apostate creature; otherwise, people may be ready to say, he holds the spirituality of the law as some others do the doctrines of grace, who never think proper to mention them, except when an occasion offers to explain them away.

If any thing in the preceding pages should be thought unkind, or exceeding the liberty we are allowed to use with a christian brother, I hope for Mr. B.'s forgiveness. I can truly say, if there is, it is unknown to me. It has been my endeavour all along to make him feel nothing except it be the force of truth.

Before I conclude, I would beg leave to recommend a few serious hints to the *reader*. Whoever he is, and whatever his opinion may be in reference to this controversy, let me intreat him to put one serious question to his own soul; *Dost* THOU *believe on the Son of God?* Let him remember, that nothing less than his eternal salvation or destruction hangs upon the answer—that the question *must* be answered sooner or later—that there is no medium between being Christ's friend and his enemy—and that it is not taking this or the other side of a dispute that will denominate any man a christian. Neither let him evade the question by answering, that he has already been acknowledged as a believer in Christ—is a member of a christian church, perhaps a preacher of the gospel, and has long been in the habit of taking this matter for granted, and of sitting in judgment upon other men, and other things—All this may be true, and yet things may issue in a dreadful disappointment.

But supposing the reader a real christian; still there is great reason for prayer and watchfulness. Reading controversies may be advantageous, or it may be hurtful; and that according to the spirit with which it is attended to. Every man had need to read with some degree of judgment of his own; and yet if he set out with a determination to receive nothing but what shall accord with his own present views of things, he is likely to derive no real good, and perhaps much harm. He may meet with what confirms him in his sentiments, and those sentiments may be on the side

of truth; but if he have such a determination, though his creed is right, his faith is wrong: especially if it lead him to despise others who think differently, and glory over them as being confuted. On the other hand, he may meet with that which contradicts his sentiments, he may reject it with abhorrence, and in so doing think his heart very much established with grace, so as not to be carried away with every wind of doctrine; and yet all may amount to nothing but a being *wise in his own eyes*.

We are never so safe as when we go about these matters with prayer, fear, and trembling. The subject here discussed is not a mere matter of speculation. It enters deeply into our spiritual concerns, relating both to this life, and that to come. It is a matter, therefore, that is well worthy of earnest prayer, and of serious and impartial attention. If truth is but sought in this manner, it will be found. *The meek he will guide in judgment, the meek he will teach his way.*

A Reply

TO THE

OBSERVATIONS OF PHILANTHROPOS.

IT may appear somewhat extraordinary that the same sentiments should be liable to opposition from two gentleman of such contrary principles as Mr. BUTTON and PHILANTHROPOS. It may be less surprizing, however, when it is considered, that there are certain points in which the most opposite extremes are known to meet. An attentive reader will perceive a great affinity in the tendency of their reasonings on various subjects. If I am not greatly mistaken, they both particularly agree in denying faith in Christ to be a duty required by the *moral law*, and in excusing the sinner, unless *grace* is bestowed upon him, in his non-compliance with every thing spiritually good.

As to the *spirit* of PHILANTHROPOS, he has treated me with candour and respect. Though I quite disapprove of many of his sentiments; and though I think he has written in some places in a manner bordering on irreverence;* yet, so far as it concerns

* P. 88, 92, 93.

myself, what he has advanced has never, that I remember, "given me a moment's pain." He has examined what I advanced with freedom. I respect him for so doing. I can, with the less fear of offence, use a like freedom in return.

Complaint is made of the use of the terms *Arminian*, *Calvinist*, &c. (p. 52—56.) When I have used the former of these terms, I am not conscious of ever having used it as "a term of reproach." As to calling P——s, or any other person an *Arminian*, I never desire to affix a name to an honest man by which he would not call himself. For my own part, though I never mean to set up any man as a standard of faith; and though in some things I think differently from *Calvin:* yet, as I agree with him in the main, particularly in the leading sentiments advanced in the former treatise; and as it served to avoid unnecessary circumlocution; I have used the term *Calvinist*, and have no objection to being so called by others. Whether P. is an *Arminian* or not, is of very little account with me; it is not very difficult, however, to discern the leading features of his scheme in the works of those who have chosen to be called by that name.

But complaint is farther made of the *Arminian divines being misrepresented.* (52, —.) Though I have no better an opinion of *Arminius's* doctrine of the Spirit's work, as given us by P. (53.) than I had before; and though I believe it would be no difficult matter to prove that the generality of Arminian divines have carried matters farther than *Arminius*

himself did, as P. seems in part to admit;* yet I acknowledge what I said on that subject, in the passage referred to, was too strong, though at the time I wrote I was not aware of it.

To what is said in p. 10, I have no material objection. What I meant was merely to disown that any sinner was encouraged by the gospel to hope for eternal life, without returning home to God by Jesus Christ. The omission of part of Isai. lv. 7. as also the mistake respecting the prayer of the publican, were altogether without design.

There are some remarks which I think are made merely for want of considering that those with whom I was in debate were *professed Calvinists*. Thus, in p. 30, I am corrected for taking that for granted which should have been proved. Had the controversy been with P. or those of his sentiments, the observation had been just; or had I called any sen-

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* If I am not misinformed, *the remonstrants*, in their apology, maintained, that "that ought not to be commanded which is wrought in us; and cannot be wrought in us which is commanded—that he foolishly commandeth that to be done of others, who will work in them what he commandeth." Cap. 9. p. 105. And to the same purpose *Episcopius*, "That it is a most absurd thing to affirm, that God either effects by his power, or procureth by his wisdom, that the elect should do those things that he requireth of them." Disp. pri. 8. Thes. 7.——These sentiments, if I understand them, amount to the same thing as "DENYING THE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO ENABLE US TO DO OUR DUTY." The above passages are taken from Dr. *Owen's Display of Arminianism*, ch. X.

timent, which was professedly a subject in debate, a "gospel doctrine," as P. has done, (38) perhaps the complaint had been made with greater propriety.

I need not have any dispute with P. concerning the *definition* of faith: for though he tells his correspondent, that I "do not suppose faith to include in it *confidence;*" yet he knows I all along maintain confidence, or trust, to be incumbent on men in general. God ought, no doubt, to be trusted or confided in for the fulfilment of whatever he has *promised*, be that what it may. I acknowledged before, that 'faith in Christ, as generally used in the New Testament, was to be taken in a large sense; as including not only the belief of the truth, but the actual outgoing of the soul towards Christ in a way of *dependence* upon him.' (p. 23.) My views of *trust*, or confidence, will be seen more fully in the *third section* of this Reply.

By what I said of believing the gospel report, and of this report *extending* not only to general truths, but to the particular description of their intrinsic nature; I certainly did not mean, as P. has understood me, "that all poor sinners who are brought to the enjoyment of salvation, must have the very same ideas of whatever God hath reported concerning Christ, and his salvation, and this to the very same *extent*." (17.) My intention was to prove, that a real belief of the gospel-report carried in it a belief of its *glory* and *importance;* and so included more than it was frequently supposed to do. Many persons observing that people would avow the general

doctrines of christianity, and yet live in a course of sin, have hence concluded that a belief of the gospel was no more than a man might have, and perish everlastingly. It was this opinion that I meant to oppose; and by proving that a real belief of the gospel is a belief of its *intrinsic nature*, as well as its general truths, I suppose I proved what was there intended: viz. that it extends farther than the faith of any wicked man, let him have assorted his notions with ever so much accuracy.

There is a great difference between a want of ideas through a natural weakness of intellect, or lack of opportunity to obtain them, and a positive rejection of what God hath revealed. There is an equal difference between a christian of weak capacity believing the intrinsic excellency of the gospel, and "being able to *describe* it, or even to ascertain all the general truths of christianity." The weakest christian believes and lives upon THAT in the gospel, of which a wicked man, whatever be his intellects and advantages, has no idea. *We* ALL *with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.* But *the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.**

P. allows the necessity of believing the gospel; (16.) and yet seems afterwards rather to wish to set this idea aside, and to place the essence of faith in

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 4.

trusting or *confiding* in Christ for salvation. (17, 18.) But shall we not talk without meaning, if we talk of confiding in Christ without respect had to something testified, or some *rule* by which our confidence is to be directed? If we dispense with the *truth of God*, as the warrant and rule of our confidence, however it may become very extensive, and fit professors of opposite ways of thinking, it will be found at the great day no better than a building erected upon the sand.

As to the question, "To what *degree* or *extent* must a poor sinner believe the truth of the gospel?" (16) it is not for me to answer it. If I were asked, to what degree of *holiness* must a man arrive in order to *see the Lord?* I should be equally unable to reply. That men have different natural capacities and opportunities, is certainly true; and according to the different degrees of these are their obligations both to receive God's truth, and to exert themselves for his glory. That there is also great *contrariety* of sentiment is equally true; and how far the mercy of God may extend, through the death of his Son, in passing over the errors of men's minds, or those of their conduct, is not for me to say; but I think it is our business to maintain a *rule* for faith as well as practice.

But waving lesser remarks, the substance of what is advanced may, I think, be reduced to the following heads; whether regeneration is prior to coming to Christ, as a cause is prior to its effect—whether moral inability is, or is not excusable—whether faith

in Christ is required by the moral law—and whether an obligation upon all those to whom the gospel is preached to believe in Christ, and the encouragements held out to them so to do, is inconsistent with a limitation of design in his death.——On each of these subjects I shall make a few remarks.

SECTION FIRST.

WHETHER REGENERATION IS PRIOR TO OUR COMING TO CHRIST.

THOSE writers whose sentiments I made free to examine, generally maintain a distinction between the principle and the act of faith. I did not dispute this matter, but admitted it, and endeavoured to prove the point then in question upon those principles. P. greatly disapproves of this distinction, and asks "wherein the distinction lies? and where the scripture teaches us to make it? (14.) The difference between a principle and an actual exertion, was supposed to be illustrable by a principle of *honesty* being previous to an upright conduct; but P. thinks this will not answer the end, because faith is purely *mental*, it being *with the heart* that man believeth." Although this is true, yet I see not how it affects the matter. A principle of honesty is as

necessary to a *purpose* to act uprightly, which is a mental exertion, as it is to the action itself.

It is not supposed, however, that there is a distinct principle wrought in the heart which may be called a principle of *faith*, in distinction from other graces; but rather a new turn, or bias of mind previous to all acts or exercises whatsoever, internal or external, which are spiritually good. And if faith is an act of the mind at all; if, especially, it be taken for the soul's *coming* to Christ, as P. contends; then, unless *an evil tree can bring forth good fruit*,* there must be a new bias of mind previous to such an act.—Again, coming to Christ, if it be a duty, (and P. will allow it is,) must be something *pleasing* to God; and if this may be done prior to the Spirit of God dwelling in us, then it should seem, notwithstanding what the scripture affirms to the contrary, that they *who are in the flesh* MAY *please God;* for every man is in the flesh till the Spirit of God dwelleth in him.†

One should think, not only scripture, but a common observation of the workings of our own minds might teach us the need of a bias of mind different from that which prevails over men in general, in order to come to Christ. Whoever be the *cause* of such a bias, let that at present be out of the question; suppose it is man himself, still a turn of some sort there must be; for it will hardly be said that the same thoughts, and temper of mind which lead a man to

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* Matt. xvii. 18. † Rom. viii. 8, 9.

despise and reject the Saviour, will lead him to esteem and embrace him! That a turn of mind is necessary to our coming to Christ seems evident then, from the nature of things; and if so, our mistake must lie, if any where, in ascribing it to the Spirit of God.

Whether the first beginning of God s work upon the mind consists in giving us a *spiritual discernment*, whereby *spiritual things*, or the importance and glory of divine truth are discerned; or whether it consists in a divine energy attending the word itself, causing it to break in, as it were, upon the mind, and bear down every opposition before it—are questions which have each their difficulties. But whatever difficulties might attend a discussion of these questions, and whatever might be the issue; it would very little, if at all, affect the *present* controversy. If it is said, it *does* affect it, for if the first beginning of God's work upon the mind is *by* the word, it must be by the word *believed*. I answer, 1. That may be questioned. The word, it is true, must be *understood* in a measure in order to have any effect; but it is a question with me whether a person must believe the gospel before it can have any effect upon him. We know that truth frequently maintains a long struggle with darkness and error before they are overcome; during which time it may be said that God has been at work upon the mind by means of his word, and yet that word cannot be said to be *believed* till the opposition drops, and the soul becomes a captive; in other words, till the heart is brought to set seal that God is true. If it is insisted that that degree of

conviction which exists in the mind, while the heart remains unsubdued, is properly called *believing* the word so far as it goes, I shall not dispute about terms, but shall at the same time insist, that it is not such believing as to denominate any person *a believer*. But, 2. P. insists that faith in Christ is something more than believing the divine testimony, that it is the soul's actual *coming* to Christ; now if so, though the word should be allowed to be instrumental in the renewal of the mind, yet that renewal must precede believing, or the soul's application to the Saviour—So that granting him all he can desire, it will not prove that regeneration follows upon believing in his sense of the word.

The great question between us is this, WHETHER THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD IS THE PROPER AND EFFICIENT CAUSE OF A SINNER'S BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST; OR WHETHER IT BE OWING TO HIS HOLY INFLUENCE, AND THAT ALONE, THAT ONE SINNER BELIEVES IN CHRIST RATHER THAN ANOTHER? If this were but allowed, we should be contented. If the first beginning of God's work upon the mind is *by* the word, let it but be granted that it is by the *agency* of the Holy Spirit, causing that word to be embraced by one person so as it is not by another, and so to become effectual, and we are satisfied. If this is but granted, it will amount to the same thing as that which we mean by regeneration preceding our coming to Christ, since the cause always precedes the effect.

But if I rightly understand P. he leaves out the agency of the Holy Spirit in the act itself of believing, maintaining that the Spirit is not given till after we have believed. (22.) If there is any divine agency in the matter, it can be only a sort of grace which is given to men in common; and this can be no reason why any man believes rather than another, it is the man himself after all who is the proper cause of his own believing. It is owing to himself, it seems that the good work is begun, and then God promises to carry it on to the day of Jesus Christ.

I cannot but think this sentiment highly derogatory to the honour of the Holy Spirit, and contrary to the tenor of the sacred scriptures. In proof of this, let the following observations be duly considered.

I. The scriptures not only represent salvation as being *through faith*, but they ascribe *faith itself* to the operation of the Spirit of God—Those who come to Christ are described as having first *heard* and *learned* of the Father, and as being *drawn* by him; nor can any man come to him except it be *given* him of the Father. Nor can this *learning* be applied to the mere outward ministry of the word, for *all* who are thus *taught of God* do not come to Christ. *Faith*, as well as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness, is a *fruit* of the Spirit. We *believe*, *according to the working of his mighty power;* a power equal to that which raised our Lord from the dead. *Faith* is expressly said to be *of the operation of God.* We are not only saved *by grace, through faith*, but even THAT *is not of ourselves*, IT IS THE

GIFT OF GOD. If regeneration is brought about by any exertion of ours, it is not only contrary to all ideas of generation, to which it undoubtedly alludes; but also to the express testimony of scripture, which declares that *we are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

Those parts of scripture which speak of the instrumentality of the word in our sanctification, take care to ascribe all to the *agency* of the Holy Spirit. They who understand the gospel, and who are changed into the same image, are represented as so doing *by the Spirit of God.* Christ did not pray that the truth might sanctify men; but that GOD would sanctify them *by* his truth. If the word become effectual, it is when it comes not in *word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.* If it bring about the *salvation* of those who believe, it is because it is *the power of* GOD to that end.†

II. The scriptures represent *all the great instances of conversion as effects of some peculiar out-pourings of the Spirit of God.* We may instance in *two* periods; the time of the great conversions in the apostles days, and the time of latter-day glory, yet to come. Of the *former* of these periods, it was promised before-hand, *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion, rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing* IN THE DAY OF THY

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* John vi 44, 45, 65. Gal. v. 22. Eph. i. 19. Col. ii. 12. Eph. ii. 8. John i. 13.

† 2 Cor. iii. 18. John xvii. 17. 1 Thes. i. 5. Rom. i. 16.

POWER. And again, *In that day, I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of supplications;* and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.—In that day there shall be a fountain opened, &c.* These promises were gloriously accomplished soon after Christ's ascension, when thousands of those who had voted for the crucifixion of the Messiah, became captives to all-conquering grace!

The Lord Jesus himself preached to these very people; yet, though he was the greatest of all preachers, he laboured in vain. They believed not his report. He was a root out of a dry ground in their eyes. How came they to believe the apostles rather than him? To what cause can it be imputed, but to *the arm of the Lord being revealed?* To what cause can we ascribe their superior success, not only in Judea, but throughout the Gentile world, except to the *Spirit being poured down from on high*, in consequence of Christ's ascension? Christ told his disciples that they should do the works that he did, and *greater* works than those, because, says he; I go unto my Father. Yes, hence it was that the Spirit of truth was sent, not only to comfort believers, but *to convince the world of sin.*†

The *prayers* of the apostles and primitive ministers shew that their hope of success did not arise from

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* Psal. cx. 2, 3. Zech. xii. 10. xiii. 1.

† Isai. liii. 1. xxxii. 15. John xiv. 12. xvi. 8.

the pliableness of men's tempers, or the suitableness of the gospel to their dispositions: but from the power of Almighty God attending their ministrations. The weapons of their warfare, however fitted for the purpose, were *mighty* THROUGH GOD to the pulling down of strong holds. To GOD they sent up their earnest and united petitions, before they opened their commission. Meeting in an upper room, they continued with one accord, in prayer and supplication. And afterwards we find the apostle Paul requesting his Thessalonian brethren to pray for him and his associates in the work of the ministry, *that the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified.**

The great accessions to the church of God in the *latter-days*, is ascribed to the same cause. In the 60th chapter of Isaiah, after abundance of rich promises of a large and glorious increase—after the multitudes of conversions to Christ had been rapturously resembled to a *cloud*, and the *flockings* of doves to their windows, the whole is thus concluded—"Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch OF MY PLANTING, THE WORK OF MY HANDS, THAT I MAY BE GLORIFIED. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I THE LORD WILL HASTEN IT IN HIS TIME." When the seventh angel sounded, and voices were heard, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, the four and twenty elders immediately

* 2 Cor. x. 4. Acts i. 14. 2 Thes. iii. 1.

fell upon their faces, and blessed him who was, who is, and who is to come, because he had TAKEN TO HIM HIS GREAT POWER AND REIGNED.*

But if the Spirit of God is not the cause why one sinner believes in Christ rather than another, then he is not the cause why there are more believers at one period of time than at another. And if so, to what purpose are either the *promises* or *prayers* before cited? As to the *former*, however strong they speak of latter-day glory, and of *God's taking to him his great power, and reigning*, they are, after all, mere predictions of what *will* be, rather than promises of what *shall* be. The same may be said of the promises concerning the success of the gospel after Christ's ascension. As to the *latter*, to what purpose was it to *pray* for what they already had? They had a gospel adapted to the condition of lost sinners; and as to divine grace, if any thing of that kind is necessary to a reception of it, their hearers are supposed to have had a sufficiency of it already bestowed upon them, otherwise it had been a mockery to address them. Now, if things are so, might not the apostles have expected some such an answer to their prayers as was given to *Dives?* "They have Moses and the prophets, yea Christ and the apostles, let them hear them; I have given them grace sufficient already; I shall do nothing more in order to their conversion, nothing at all until they have believed."

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* Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17.

III. The scriptures represent God as having *a determinate design* in his goings forth in a way of grace, a design which shall never be frustrated.—My counsel, saith the Lord, *shall stand*, and *I will do all my pleasure. I will work, and who shall let it?* In the sending forth of his gospel particularly he speaks on this wise, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and *bud*, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out my mouth, it shall not return unto me *void;* but it shall *accomplish* that which I please, and it shall *prosper* in the thing whereto I sent it."*——But the scheme of P. if I understand it, supposes no such *design.* On the contrary, it supposes that God in sending his Son into the world, and the gospel of salvation by him, never *absolutely* determined the salvation of one soul; that notwithstanding any provision which *he* had made to the contrary, the whole world, after all, might have eternally perished. The Son of God might never have seen of the travel of his soul, the gospel might have been a universal savor of death unto death, and the whole harvest of the divine proceedings *an heap in the day of grief, and of desperate sorrow!*

To say that God designed to save *believers*, and therefore his design is not frustrated, is to say true,

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* Isai. xlvi. 10. xliii. 13. lv. 10, 11.

but not sufficient. For how if there had been no believers to save? And there might have been none at all according to this scheme; and so, instead of the serpent's head being bruised by the seed of the woman, Satan might at last have come off triumphant; and the creator, the redeemer, and the sanctifier of men, might have been baffled in all the works of their hands!

IV. The characters of the converted, during their carnal state, is frequently such as proves that their conversion is to be ascribed to sovereign, discriminating, and efficacious grace.—It is not owing to any excellency in the objects, either *natural* or *moral*, that they are converted rather than others. The apostle appeals to the Corinthians, in respect of the former kind of excellencies—"For ye see your *calling*, brethren, how that not many *wise* men after the flesh, not many *mighty*, not many *noble*, are called. But God hath *chosen* the foolish—the weak—and the base things of this world, to confound the wise; the mighty, &c. And all this is said to be, "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But OF HIM, continues the apostle, ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord."*

God bestows converting grace without any respect to *moral qualities*. The chief of sinners are frequent-

* 1 Cor. i. 26.

ly brought to believe in Christ before others who are far behind them in iniquity. Numberless examples might be produced of this; I shall only instance in the cases of those two famous, or rather infamous cities, *Jerusalem* and *Corinth*. The one had been guilty of shedding the Redeemer's blood, and the other was a sink of abominations. And yet there were more believers in these cities than in almost any other. How this can be accounted for, but upon the supposition of sovereign and invincible grace, is difficult to say. For whether the depravity of man is sufficient to overcome any grace that is not invincible, or no, it will be allowed surely to have a *tendency* that way. And if so, one should think, the greater the depravity of any man is, the more improbable must be his conversion. The worst of sinners, therefore, believing before others, appears to be altogether inexplicable upon the scheme here opposed: but to sovereign and omnipotent grace every mountain becomes a plain; and to this the conversions in both these cities are attributed in scripture. Of the one it was promised, "Thy people *shall be willing in the day of thy power*." As to the other, they were afterwards reminded that though they had been of the worst of characters; yet now they were washed,—and sanctified *by the Spirit of God*. And before their conversion, the apostle was encouraged in preaching by this testimony, *I have much people in this city!**

* Psal. cx. 3. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Acts xviii. 10.

V. The scriptures represent the grace given by the Holy Spirit, as being *effectual;* or as producing *certain*, and abiding effects.—One great difference between the covenant made with the whole nation of Israel at Sinai, and that which God promised to make with his elect under the gospel, appears to consist in this, that the former only propounded things by way of moral suasion; but the latter not only admits of this, but provides for its becoming effectual. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers—which covenant they brake—But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their *inward parts*, and write it *in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people*."* This seems to constitute one essential difference between the law and the gospel, on account of which the one is called the *letter*, and the other the *spirit*. The one is a mere inefficient rule of right and wrong; the other makes provision for the bestowment of the Holy Spirit. It is observable also that these promises which respect the *first beginning* of real good in the soul, are in every respect *absolute*. When promises are made of things which *follow after* our believing, they are generally, if not always connected with something good in the subject; thus

* Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 33.

it is promised, that the *righteous* shall hold on his way, and that they that *hold out to the end*, shall be saved;—but nothing of that kind is mentioned here.

If it is objected, that after mention made of some such things in the prophecy of Ezekiel, it is added, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them**—I reply, it is granted, that nothing is more reasonable than that every man should pray to God to create in him a clean heart, and renew in him a right spirit; and yet nothing is more certain than that no man ever did so pray in sincerity and truth, while under the dominion of sin. And if God, in the bestowment of a new heart, were to wait for this, not an individual would be found amongst the fallen race of man to be a recipient of his favour.† But how then are we to understand the passage before cited? I answer, does not the Lord there speak of what he would do for his *church*, in a way of increasing it *with men like a flock?* If giving a *new heart*, in the former part of the chapter, is to be understood of regeneration, God might make promises to them to renew souls for their enlargement, and these promises might

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* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 37.

† ——————————————Grace,
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought.
Happy for man so coming! He her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost.
MILTON.

be fulfilled in answer to *their* prayers, though not in answer to the prayers of the unregenerate.

VI. The apostle Peter styles those to whom he wrote, "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Spirit*, UNTO OBEDIENCE." (1st ep. i. 2.) *Obedience*, it should seem, *in all its parts*, according to this passage, is that of which election and the sanctification of the Spirit are the proper causes. By the first they are chosen *to* it, through the last they are *fitted for it*. Now P. must admit, that faith in Christ is not only the root of evangelical obedience, but that itself being a duty is *a part of* obedience. Hence it is that believing in Christ is called *obeying* him, (Rom. x. 16. vi. 17. i. 5. Heb. v. 9.) and the contrary is represented as *disobeying* him. (2 Thes. i. 8, 9. 1 Pet. iv. 17.) It follows then that if election and the sanctification of the Spirit are the causes of our obedience, they must be the causes of our believing; and consequently must precede it, since the cause always precedes the effect. GOD BE THANKED, says the grateful apostle, that ye have *obeyed* from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered you!*

VII. Whatever *difference* there is between us and others, we are taught in the scriptures to ascribe it all to God, and not to boast as if it were of ourselves.—"Are we better than they? no, in no wise.

* Rom vi. 17.

"By the grace of God I am what I am. How is it, Lord, that thou should'st manifest thyself to us, as thou dost not unto the world! Who maketh thee to *differ?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"*

That there is a *difference* between believers and unbelievers, all will allow; but if the question be asked, *who maketh thee to differ?* what must be the answer? If the scheme of P. be true, I should think it must be a person's *own self, and not God.* If he reply, No, I do not maintain that man *of himself* can do any thing spiritually good, it is all by the *grace* of God.—Be it so; this grace is supposed to be given indiscriminately to mankind in general. This, therefore, does not in the least alter the case. However the grace of God may be a *remote* cause of the good that is in me; yet it is easy to see, upon this supposition, it is no cause whatever of the *difference* between me and another. My unbelieving neighbour had, or might have had, as much grace given him as I; but either he did not ask it, or did not improve the stock imparted to him, which I did. He resisted the Holy Ghost, but I was of a pliable temper, and yielded to his persuasions. I have, therefore, by a good improvement of the grace given or offered to me in common with my neighbour, to all intents and purposes made

* Rom. iii. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 10. John xiv. 22. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

myself to differ. . . But who am I personating? *Philanthropos?* no, surely! It is the language of his creed, not of him—no, no, whatever may escape from the lip, or the pen, his *heart* must unite with ours, NOT UNTO US, LORD, NOT UNTO US, BUT TO THY NAME GIVE GLORY!

If it is objected, The apostle is writing to the Corinthians concerning *spiritual gifts* and advantages, and cutting off their vain boastings on that score, and not concerning spiritual dispositions; I answer, there is, in my opinion, considerable evidence of the contrary; (See Dr. *Gill's* Cause of God and Truth, part II. ch. IV. No. XV. and Dr. *Guyse's* paraphrase and note upon the text,) but be that as it may, the *reasoning* with which this is effected is equally applicable to the latter as the former. If there is any force in the apostle's reasoning, it certainly implies thus much, that if in any thing whatever we do make ourselves to differ, then we have so far a ground for boasting; and if, as believers, we make ourselves to differ from unbelievers, then boasting in the affairs of our salvation, after all, is not excluded; no, not by *the law of faith.*

I remember a noted writer admits as much as this, and maintains, that though the primitive christians had no reason to boast or glory in their enjoyment of spiritual gifts, seeing they were immediately infused without human industry, and were dispensed by God, and by his Spirit, according to his good pleasure; yet that is not the case in respect of virtue and pious dis-

positions—In these he avers we may boast; yes, in these we may glory in ourselves.* But I have too good an opinion of the humility of P. to imagine that such sentiments can occupy his bosom. I cannot persuade myself that he hath so learned Christ. I will venture to repeat it, whatever his hostile *creed* may affirm, his *heart*, especially in his near addresses to God, must accord with the apostle, *Of him*, yes, OF HIM, are ye in Christ Jesus—he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!†

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* Dr. *Whitby*, on 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'Tis true, the Doctor observes, "That we having our faculties from God, the action may well be ascribed, and the whole glory must be due to him." Indeed? If the *whole* be due to him, how is it that we are entitled to a part? Besides, how does this ascribe the glory of our being made to differ to God, seeing one is possessed of these faculties as well as another?

† The hinge of a great part of the controversy between us turns on the solution of the above subject. That there is a difference between one man and another, cannot be called in question. This difference is either to be ascribed to the grace of God or to the goodness of the creature. If to the former, the supposition of God's making no difference between one man and another must be given up; if to the latter, then boasting is not excluded, but cherished, even by the law of faith.

It may seem as if we were wanting in our LOVE TO MANKIND; and by the name my opponent hath assumed, he seems to wish to remind us of it, and to suggest the superiority of his system in point of *Philanthropy*. But it is not for human passions to govern the divine conduct. We should rejoice in the salvation of the whole human race, if it pleased God; but the whole human race will not be finally saved. That is a fact admitted on both sides, and a fact which the utmost flow of Philanthropy

But it is time for me to attend to the REASONINGS AND OBJECTIONS OF P. upon this subject. Are there not passages of scripture, it may be asked, which represent the Spirit as being given to us *after* we believe? Yes, there are; and to some of them P. refers us.* (22.) To which it is replied, The Holy Spirit is said to be given in other respects, as well as for the purpose of regeneration. The Spirit was given for the endowing of the primitive christians with extraordinary gifts, and grace. See Acts xix. 2. And this is evidently the meaning of John vii. 39. The Spirit which they that believed on him were to receive, was *not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* But surely the eleven apostles were not till then, in every sense, destitute of the Spirit of God! *Farther*, The Holy Spirit was given as the enlightener, comforter, and sanctifier of the true christians. Thus Christ promised to send them the comforter to guide them into all truth; and this it is apprehended is the meaning of Eph. i. 13, 14. After ye believed, ye were sealed, &c. The apostle prayed for these Ephesians (v. 17.) that God would give them the *Spirit* of wisdom, &c. We might as well infer from this, that

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cannot alter; the question then with us, is who deserves the praise of the difference between one man and another? If God has made no difference, we must have made it ourselves, and to us must belong the glory of that difference to eternal ages.

* The passages he has referred us to are John vii. 38, 39. Eph. i. 13, 14. Gal. iii. 2, 14.

they were at that time destitute of the Spirit of God, as from the other that they were so in every sense till after they believed. Much the same might be said of the other passages produced.

That men are *the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*, is true; but I apprehend the godly sustain that character on two accounts. One is from their bearing the image of their heavenly Father, which is communicated in regeneration; the other is from their sharing the rights, privileges, and inheritance of the sons of God, which follow upon believing. The one is a work of grace upon us, the other an act of grace towards us. Both are mentioned by the evangelist John, (ch. i. 12, 13.) and the former, I apprehend, is there represented as being prior to the latter.

As to the consequence which P. observes must follow—as that a man must be "regenerated and condemned at the same time;" (22.) I answer, this proceeds upon the supposition of a *period of time* taking place between regeneration and coming to Christ. When we speak of one being prior to the other, we mean no more than as a cause is prior to an effect which immediately follows. A blind man must have his eyes opened *before* he can see; and yet there is no period of time between the one and the other. As soon as his eyes are opened, he sees. And thus it is supposed a man must be *born again* in order to *see* the kingdom of God.* A man of a

* John iii. 3.

wicked temper of mind must be *turned* to be of another spirit before he can love or choose that which is lovely; but yet there is no supposeable period of time between them; for no sooner is he turned than he is of another spirit, and does love and choose different objects to what he did before.

If, however, P. should not be satisfied with this answer, let him reflect, that if an absurdity remains, it is such an one as attends his own principles equally with our's. He supposes we receive the Spirit *after* believing, and refers us for proof to Eph. i. 13. *After* ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. (22) Now the scripture is express, *He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his.** We might therefore retort, and ask, in what condition is a man when he has believed, and before he has received the Spirit of Christ? He is supposed to be a believer, and therefore shall not come into condemnation; but yet having not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. To what master then does he belong? and to what world must he go if he should happen to die in that condition?——But this is mere trifling—be it so, it is such trifling as when used against us, occupies the place of reasoning.

But "if men are regenerated before they come to Christ, then believing in Christ is not the *mean* of a sinner's recovery, but only a *consequence* of that recove-

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* Rom. viii. 9.

ry." (23) Coming to Christ is the mean of a sinner's enjoying the forgiveness of sins with various other blessings, all included in the term *life;* John v. 40. but that is no proof that it is the mean of his regeneration; which it cannot be, unless, contrary to every law of nature to which *regeneration* alludes, spiritual motion can precede, and be the means of spiritual life. Perseverance is the mean of our enjoyment of eternal glory; but it does not thence follow but that perseverance is a consequence of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

But if regeneration precede our coming to Christ, then, "men are excusable, it is supposed, in not coming; and it must be absurd to exhort them to it while they are unregenerate." (22) If I understand this reasoning, the amount of it is this—If men are so bad that none but God can turn their hearts, then their badness becomes excusable; and if in our exhorting them, no hope is to be placed *in them*, then neither is there any to be placed *in God!* Were I to enter the company of a malicious rebel, with a view to persuade him to go and cast himself at the feet of his abused sovereign; I should have no hope of succeeding, or of bringing him to a compliance, while he remained under the dominion of such a spirit. Why then, it may be asked, do you exhort him to it till you see his spirit changed? Why, what if I go in hope of being instrumental in the changing of his spirit? Suppose I urge upon him the goodness of the law he has broken—his wicked and unreasonable revolt—his great and imminent danger—and above all

the clemency of the prince towards returning rebels;—suppose I conjure him therefore to go and submit to mercy; may not all this be done without imagining that going and submitting to mercy is a matter so easy that it may be done by a person possessing a mind still under the dominion of wickedness? May it not rather be done in hope that such means may be succeeded to the reducing him to a right spirit.*

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* But might we not, upon these principles, as well let them alone? Some, I am sensible, of very different sentiments from P. would say, we might; and that such a mode of exhorting is only a setting them to *work*, which tends to fill them with an idea of their *own righteousness*. It is granted, if the *works* to which they are directed, are mere *external* things, such as are "within the compass of a carnal heart;" and such as they may go on in with ease; then it may tend to lift them up with pride and self-sufficiency. But if things which are spiritually good are pressed upon them, and they go about a compliance, it is so far from having a tendency to promote self-righteousness, that it is the most likely mean to destroy it. People who never *try* to repent, pray, &c. generally think they can do those things at any time. Putting a person to the experiment, is the most likely way to convince him of his insufficiency, or in other words, of his dreadful depravity; and if this is but effected, he will then cry in earnest to the strong for strength. I believe it is God's usual way thus to convince people of their insufficiency. While Saul went on in *external* services, he was at ease, alive, and in high spirits, not doubting but that all was right, and that he was doing God service; but a view of his great obligations to things spiritually good, discovered to him a world of iniquity of which he had never thought. It was from this period that his self-righteousness received its fatal wound; yes, then it was that *sin revived*,

This also may serve for a reply to what P. observes on "exhorting those who are in doubt of their conversion, to apply to Christ." (25) I think with him, it is much better to direct such persons immediately to apply to Christ, than to set them about examining the evidences of their regeneration to the neglect of that. And though he is pleased to call this "absurd and ridiculous" upon my principles, yet he has not condescended to back that asser-

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and *he died.* Rom. vii. 9. Now if this is God's usual method of working, surely we ought not, as ministers, to set ourselves against it, but rather to concur with it.

It is worthy of remark, how well our opponents here agree amongst themselves. 'Tis true they differ in some respects: the one think coming to Christ a matter so easy that an unrenewed heart may some how or other accomplish it; the other cannot think so, and therefore confine their exhortations, to things of an external nature. But both agree in this, that men should not be exhorted to any thing but what may be done by an unregenerated heart; that is, by a heart at enmity with God. "Surely, says P. it cannot be sin for men, as depraved, not to attempt that which the word tells them they *cannot* perform." (25) And the reasonings of Mr. *Button* are frequently of the same tendency. But whether such a position be agreeable or contrary to the word of God, let the following passages, amongst many others, determine. Jer. vi. 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16. Matt. xii. 34. John v. 44, 45 viii. 43—46 Rom. viii. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 14.—If Mr. *Button* should here complain, and say, he has acknowledged that "*internal religion* is required of men in general,"—I answer, If Mr. B. or any other minister does indeed exhort the carnal part of their auditory to any thing more than what is "within the compass of a carnal heart," then it is acknowledged they are not affected by what is above advanced.

tion with any thing like evidence. If regeneration were that which constituted our *warrant* to apply to Christ, his reasoning would be just; but if it is only a begetting in us a *right spirit*, a spirit to comply with the warrant which we already have, then there is no weight in it. All right action, whether corporeal or mental, must proceed from a right spirit; yet if a man were in doubt whether he was of a right spirit, which would be reckoned the most ridiculous, to exhort him to right action, or to set him to examine his spirit by rules of theory; and bid him wait till he found he was of a good spirit, and then perform a good action? The latter would be pernicious, or to say the least, perplexing; but a compliance with the former would be attended with both safety and satisfaction.

P. frequently makes mention of a passage from Mr. *Caleb Evans*, which I also had quoted, which is as follows—"The calls and invitations, the promises and threatenings of the word of God, are means which every one knows are in their own nature adapted to remove a moral indisposition of the mind, just as much as the prescriptions of a physician, or the operations of a surgeon are suited to remove any natural disorder of the body." He also frequently speaks as if the reason why the gospel succeeded to the conversion of a sinner rather than the law, was because of this fitness, adaptedness, or innate tendency of which it is possessed. (67.) But it should be observed, Mr. *Evan's* words are not spoken simply of the *gospel*—they are spoken of the *threaten-*

ings as well as the promises in the word of God, which I should think are no part of the gospel, though, as P. somewhere expresses it, they are necessarily attendant on it, and so make a part of the ministerial message.

Farther, our dispute is not whether the gospel be a suitable mean in the hand of the Holy Spirit to convert a sinner, but whether it is sufficient in virtue of this its suitableness to effect the change without an almighty and invincible agency attending it? A sword is a suitable instrument to cause a wound; but it does not thence follow that it is of itself sufficient to effect this without a hand to wield it. Three things I would here beg leave to offer, 1. The Holy Spirit can and doth make use of the *law*, in a sinners conversion as well as the gospel. "I had not *known sin*, saith the apostle, but by the *law*." "The *law* is a schoolmaster, *to bring us to Christ*."* 2. If the success of the gospel is to be attributed to its suitableness, then I suppose it must be on account of its containing *good tidings;* and so tending to slay mens native enmity, and conciliate their hearts to God. But the scripture represents the human heart as equally prone to abuse God's mercy, as to despise his severity. "Let *favour* be shewn to the wicked says the prophet, yet will he not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord."† The

* Rom. vii. 7. Gal. iii. 24. † Isa. xxvi. 10.

reason why men hate God is not because they consider him as in every sense their enemy: if so, could you but persuade them that God loved them, and Christ died for them, their enmity would subside. But is that indeed the case? Do not the generality of men consider God as their Friend? nor can you persuade them that they are under his displeasure. Yet this hath no tendency to remove their enmity. What they hate in God is that to which their hearts are wholly averse, and that is his *true character*. 3. The success which has attended the gospel is not ascribed to its supposed fitness to conciliate a sinner's heart, but to the power of Almighty God attending it. I hope this last has been sufficiently proved already. God ordered Moses to take a rod, and smite the rock. The rod to be sure was the means of breaking the rock; not however on account of its being *equal* to such an effect: the rock rather had a tendency to break the rod than the rod the rock. But an Almighty energy attended it from him with whom all things are possible.

That the gospel is suited to the state of men, as fallen, is granted; (23.) It *is* suited to their forlorn *circumstances*, but *not* to their evil *propensities*. It could not be of God if it were. But to make believing in Christ something that may be done by a wicked mind, is to reduce the gospel to the latter rather than the former; and this contrary to the apostle's declaration, *They that are in the flesh, cannot please God.**

* Rom. viii. 8.

P. observes that if believing is the effect of regeneration, then men certainly "ought to be taught this truth;" and seems greatly to tremble for the consequences of such teaching. (22.) It is granted there is a way of conveying this sentiment which is very pernicious; nevertheless I see no reason why we should scruple the publishing of the sentiment itself, in the course of our ministry. To tell a sinner he *cannot* love God, repent of sin, and come to Christ, is only another mode of telling him that he has the very heart of a devil. But this is killing work—It is granted; and all my hope is that God will please to succeed my labours, first to kill and then to make alive. A conviction of our being utterly lost must precede an application to the Saviour. So long as a sinner can find any hope, or any help in himself, he will never fall at the feet of Christ as utterly undone. The whole need not a physician, but those that are sick. If it tends to drive sinners to *despair*, it is such a despair as lies at the foundation of gospel hope. The sinner may be *alive* without the law; but if he live to God, the commandment must first come, sin revive, and he *die*.* So far from shunning to declare this sentiment, humiliating as it is, I should rejoice therefore to see it propagated throughout the earth. That which renders it peculiarly offensive is one thing on account of which it appears to me to be a truth; and that is its laying the sinner

* Rom. vii. 9.

absolutely at the divine discretion, and cutting off all hope whatever but what shall arise from the sovereignty of God.

SECTION SECOND.

ON NATURAL AND MORAL INABILITY.

ON this subject I find it difficult to collect the real sentiments of P. Sometimes he seems to admit of the distinction, and allows that I have written upon it with "perspicuity." (63.) At other times he appears utterly to reject it, and to reason upon the supposition of there being no difference between the one and the other; and that to command a person to perform any thing with which it is not in the power of his heart to comply, (for that, he must know, is the only idea we have of moral inability) is as unreasonable, unless grace is bestowed, as to "command a stone to walk, or a horse to sing." (44.) If this is indeed the case, the distinction ought to be given up. Be that however as it may, whether there be any real difference between natural and moral inability in point of blame-worthiness or not, P. knows I suppose there is; by what rule of fair reasoning, therefore, he could take the contrary for granted, is difficult to determine.

But passing this, From the whole of what P. has written on this subject, I observe there are *three* things which, some how or other, either severally or jointly, are supposed to constitute even a moral inability blameless. One is, men could not *avoid* it; they were depraved and ruined by *Adam's* transgression——Another is, its being so great in degree as to be *insuperable*——And the last is, if *grace* is not given sufficient to deliver us from it. "If, says he, men could never *avoid it*, and *cannot deliver themselves from it*, and *the blessed God will not deliver them;* surely they ought not to be punished for it, or for any of its *necessary* effects." (67.)

The *first two* of these suppositions, be it observed, are admitted by P. as *facts*. Men *are*, he acknowledges, born in sin, and "their inability to do things spiritually good is real and total." (44. 57.) They cannot love God, nor keep his holy law.——Now these facts either do excuse mankind in their want of conformity to the law, or they do not. If they do not, why are they produced? If they do, there is no need for what respects the *last* supposition. There is no need surely for *grace* to deliver men from a state wherein they are already *blameless*. The *justice* of God, one should think, would see to that, and prevent the innocent from being condemned.—But let us give each of these subjects a separate consideration.

I. *Men being* BORN IN SIN, *or inheriting their evil propensities from Adam's fall.*——It has been observed already, that P. admits the *fact;* now to admit this

fact is, I should think, to admit a *consituted union* having taken place between Adam and his posterity. And yet the whole of what he says upon this subject proceeds from the supposition of no such *union* taking place; for he all along speaks of Adam and his descendants in a *separate* capacity. Thus he insists upon it that "*we* could not be to blame, for what *we* could not avoid," with many passages of the like kind. Very true, but if the notion of a union between Adam and his posterity be admitted, then it cannot properly be said *we* could not avoid it; for in that case, he was the head, and we the members, the whole constituting one body, or as it were one person. A union of this nature must either be admitted, or denied; if admitted, why consider the descendants of Adam in a *separate* capacity? If denied, why speak of inheriting any thing from him, unless it were by ill example?

Infants are not to blame in a *personal* capacity; but if there be a union between the parent of mankind and his posterity, through which their depravity is derived, as it is supposed there is, they must be to blame *relatively*. No one, I suppose, can be to blame in a personal capacity till he is capable of the knowledge of right and wrong; but it does not follow from thence that till then he is *in every sense* blameless, for that would be the same thing as to be sinless; and if so, I see not how they can be said to be born *in sin*. If there is not blame somewhere, it will be difficult to account for the misery and death to which infants are exposed; and for the apostle's mode of

reasoning, who first asserts that before the Mosaic law *sin* was in the world, and then proves this assertion by the reign of *death* even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*

That this is a difficult and awful subject is allowed, and so is the introduction of moral evil into the world, be it upon what hypothesis it may: it is a subject however, which in my apprehension, I must either admit, or reject the authority of the bible; and when I had done that, my difficulties instead of being diminished, would be abundantly increased. I therefore admit it upon the credit of divine revelation; and herein it seems I have the happiness to agree with P. He admits that men become sinners in consequence of Adam's fall. The question then between us seems to be this, whether to be a *sinner* is the same thing as to be a subject of *blame;* or whether there be a sort of sin which has nothing blame-worthy in it, and a sort of sinners who nevertheless are blameless beings?

P. admits of our being born with *impure propensities*, and yet supposes these propensities in themselves to be blameless. He reckons the whole blame to lie not in being the subject of these propensities, but in the *exercise*, and *indulgence* of them. (65, 66.) I confess I cannot understand how this can consist either with his own sentiments, or with the nature of things. Not with his own sentiments, for he allows

* Rom. v. 13, 14.

that "men are *ruined* and *depraved* by Adam's fall." But how can we be ruined and depraved by that which does not in any sense constitute us blame-worthy? What though we derive impure propensities from him, yet if these propensities are innocent, how can they *ruin* us? how can they *deprave* us? Our depravity must consist in, and our ruin arise from that which constitutes blame, and that alone; and if blame lies merely in the *indulgence* of impure propensity, and not in being the subject of the thing itself; why, then it is there we have to look for the *beginning* of depravity and ruin, and no where else. How far these sentiments will agree likewise with the doctrine of human depravity, which P. assures us, he by no means intended to oppose, may deserve his attention.

Farther, I see not how the above sentiments can consist with *the nature of things*. If blame does not lie in being the subject of an evil disposition because as individuals we could not avoid it; then for the same reason it cannot lie in the *exercise* of that disposition, unless that also can be avoided. And this is what P. seems to allow, for he extends blamelessness not only to evil dispositions, but to all their "necessary *effects*." (67.) Now there is either a possibility of that *exercise* being totally avoided, or there is not—there is either a possibility, for instance of a person living all his life without a *foolish thought*, or there is not. If there is, then there is a possibility of going through life in a sinless state; and if so, how are we depraved by Adam's fall? If there is not, then, it must follow, that the exercise of evil disposi-

tions may be blameless, as well as the dispositions themselves; and contrary to the decision of holy scripture, that *the thought of foolishness* is not sin.

We may go on to distinguish an evil propensity from its *exercise*, till we use words without ideas; for what is an evil propensity, but an evil bias, or a bias of the soul towards evil? and whether it is possible to conceive of an inactive propensity in a rational being, is doubtful with me. But suppose we may, the common sense of mankind never teach them so to distinguish them as to excuse the one, and place all blame-worthiness in the other. An impure propensity is an impure temper of mind, and a propensity to revenge is the same thing as a revengeful temper; but tempers of this description are so far from being excusable, that there is nothing mankind are more apt to censure. 'Tis true they cannot censure them but as they see them *discovered*, because they have no other method of knowing the evil stock but by its evil branches; but when they do discover them, they seldom fail to curse both root and branch.*

* 'Tis true, there are certain propensities which constitute a part of our nature as men, and which therefore are simply *natural;* the *excessive* indulgence whereof is nevertheless *sinful.* Thus *emulation* in itself is natural, but carried to excess it becomes *pride.* Thus also *the love of pleasure* is in itself natural, but carried to excess it becomes *voluptuousness*, &c. &c. But P. cannot justly pretend that when he makes blame to consist not in the propensity itself, but in the exercise or indulgence of it, he means these natural propensities; because he speaks of them as derived from Adam's fall, which these are not; and calls them *impure*, whereas, these, in themselves considered, are a part of human nature in its purest state.

Neither do people think of excusing a churlish, haughty, or covetous temper in any man, because of his father's being so before him. On the contrary, they often turn that very circumstance to his reproach. "You are a villain, say they, *by nature*, and all your *family* were so before you." If men offend one against another, strict enquiry is made whether the offence proceeded from an evil disposition, or from mere inadvertency; and according as this is found, allowances are made. But I know not that it is ever asked how the party *came by* his evil disposition: that is a matter introduced into *divinity*, where God is the object offended; but it cannot be admitted into the common affairs of life, between man and man. Now if the common sense of mankind never leads them to take this circumstance into consideration in matters between themselves, it is at least a presumptive argument that it will not bear advancing in matters of offence against God. *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.*

That evil dispositions are in themselves blameworthy, notwithstanding their derivation from our first parents, not only accords with the common sense of mankind, but also with *the word of God.* The word of God requires us to *love* him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength; but to love God in this manner supposes the absence of all evil propensity to rebel against him, and of every approach towards a spirit of contrariety to him. It must follow then, so long as this holy law of God is allowed to be an "infallible test of right and wrong," (67.) that

such a propensity is in itself sinful, being directly contrary to its righteous requirements. It is not merely a something which "*leads* to evil tempers;" (as P. speaks, 66.) but it is itself an evil temper of the mind; a temper that can take no delight in God, or in any thing that bears his holy likeness.

Farther, his idea of blame-worthiness, if I understand it, agrees to nothing but *positive* acts of sin; the *exercise* or *indulgence* of an evil propensity can agree to nothing else. Now according to this, there is no such thing as sin or blame in that universal want of love to God, which has place in all unregenerate men, and to an awful degree in good men; for that strictly speaking, is not so much a positively evil disposition, as it is the absence of a good one. But if the law of God is "the test of right and wrong," this must nevertheless be found sinful; for it is the very reverse of what that law requires. If there is nothing blameworthy in the want of a heart to love God, nor even in a propensity to hate him, then surely the moral law must be abrogated by man's apostacy; and can be no longer to us "the standard of right and wrong."

The law is said to have entered *that the* OFFENCE *might abound;* and by the *law* is the knowledge of *sin.** The only certain rule, therefore, of determining what is *sin*, is to enquire into the extent of that unerring rule. Now the law, as given in the decalogue, requires us to love God with all the heart,

* Rom. v. 20. iii. 20.

without making any allowance for our being born destitute of a disposition so to do. It should seem, therefore, that God considered the want of a disposition to love him as *offensive:* and gave the law which requires such a disposition that that offence might abound, or be made manifest. But if there be nothing blame-worthy in it, there can be nothing *offensive;* and if no offence exists, none can be *made to abound.*

P. allows my "reasonings on the extent of the moral law to be very conclusive." This, I should think, is rather extraordinary; but this is not all: he thinks "it would most certainly contribute much, under the blessing of God, to the conversion of sinners, if a due regard were always paid to it." (67.) But according to the reasoning above, I see no such tendency it could have. For the carnal mind of man is *enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be,* and they were born in this condition. How then could it promote rational conviction? Whatever tendency it might have to bring them to love the *Saviour*, it must be at the expence of their regard for the law-giver? Yea, it must fill them with greater enmity against him to hear of his requiring *that* of them, which it is not reasonable in their present circumstances, should be required. If they are taught to consider the law-giver of the world as resembling a cruel Egyptian task-master, and the Saviour as one who came into the world to deliver them, by repealing his rigorous edicts, then they may love the one, and hate the other. But if

the Saviour is viewed in his true character, as not coming to abrogate the law, but to *magnify, and make it honourable;* to condemn the sinner's conduct, while he saves his soul; then they cannot hate the one, without equally hating the other.

"I do not know, says P. that the scripture ever blames man, much less condemns him, because he is born impure, or because he is the subject of impure propensities." (65.) As to the actual execution of condemnation, it is not for me to say how far the mercy of God will be extended. If those who die before their evil propensities are reduced to action are all saved; I suppose they are saved through the mediation of Christ, and not taken to heaven on the footing of personal innocency. But in respect to *blame-worthiness*, I remember a man who once took blame and shame to himself for his original impurity; bringing it in amongst his penitential confessions, that he was *shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin;* and that surely with an intention not to excuse, but not to aggravate his crimes. In the same psalm, and in the next sentence, after acknowledging the depravity of his *nature*, the penitent psalmist adds, *Thou desirest truth in the inward parts*, which I should think must intend the *opposite* of that in which he had just confessed himself to have been conceived and shapen.* Farther, we are said to have been by *nature the children of wrath;*† but one should suppose there could be no *wrath* due to us, if no blame were found in us.

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* Psal. li. 5, 6. † Ephes. ii. 3.

P. asserts that in respect of the impurity of our nature, we are under a *natural inability* of avoiding it; which therefore must be innocent. (65.) But to call such an inability as this *natural*, is, I apprehend, to apply the term in such a manner as tends to produce a confusion of ideas. Whatever defect attends any man which is simply natural, it must belong to some constituent part of his *nature*, or of that which constitutes him a *man*. If the definition which I have heretofore given of natural ability be just, (and this P. has fully acknowledged, p. 64.) it must be either a defect in 'rational faculties, or bodily powers, or opportunity to put those faculties or powers in exercise.' But neither purity nor impurity, come by them how we may, are any constituent parts of human nature; a defect therefore in that matter cannot with propriety be called a natural defect. The depravity of our hearts is not owing to natural weakness, either of body or mind, nor yet to the want of opportunity to know and glorify God. When we speak of it as being the *sin of our nature*, we use the term in a very different sense from what we do when speaking of *natural* inability. By the *sin of our nature*, we mean not any thing which belongs to our nature as human; but what is by the fall so interwoven with it, as if it were, though in fact it is not, a part of it; and so deeply rooted in our souls as to become *natural*, as it were, to us.

But it will be said "It must be a natural inability, for it is not at our option whether we will be born pure or impure; it is therefore what we cannot

avoid in any sense whatever." To this it is replied, as before, there is no justice or fairness in considering mankind as united to Adam, or disunited, just as it may serve a purpose. If they are not to be considered as *one*, why speak of inheriting impure propensities? If they are, why speak of them in a separate capacity? To admit of a union between Adam and his posterity, and at the same time keep exclaiming, *we* could not avoid being sinners—*we* are not to blame, and ought not to suffer, is as unreasonable as if a criminal should complain at the hour of execution, that he was hanged by the *neck* for what he had stolen with his *hands*. Whatever difficulty may attend us in this part, it is a difficulty that belongs not to the doctrine of natural and moral inability, but to that of *original sin;* a difficulty therefore, which affects us no more than it does those who differ from us.

II. The next thing which P. considers as contributing to render even a moral inability blameless, is its being so great in degree as to become *insuperable*. According to my principles, he says, our moral inability is invincible, and insists upon it that if so, it is excusable. "No man," says he, "blames a lion because he has not the disposition of a lamb; and if a lion had the *understanding* of a man, yet *if he could not alter* his native ferocity, he would certainly be as unblameable as he is without understanding." The same reasoning holds good in all other instances. (68.) To all which it is replied, If he mean that they *cannot but sin though they would do otherwise never so fain*, it is granted all this reasoning is fair and just.

It would then be a natural inability, and therefore excusable. But if this were all he meant, it would amount to nothing. If he mean any thing to the purpose, any thing different from that which he opposes, it must be this, that *if their hearts are so set in them to do evil, that though they could do otherwise if they would, yet they will not, but will be sure, in every instance, to choose the wrong path;* THEN *they must of course be excusable.* And if this be what he maintains, his reasoning appears to me not only inconsistent, but extravagant.

P. must know, surely, that when the terms *cannot*, *inability*, &c. are used in these connections, they are used not in a *proper*, but in a *figurative* sense—that they do not express the state of a person hindered by something extraneous to his own will, but denote what we usually mean by the phrase *cannot find in his heart*—that depravity is not *natural* to us in the same sense as ferocity is to a lion—that it is rather the ruin and disgrace of our nature than any part of it—and that therefore such comparisons are but ill adapted to illustrate the subject.

We suppose the propensities of mankind to evil are so strong as to become invincible by every thing but omnipotent grace; but whether that is allowed or not, it must be allowed, I think, they are such as to render spiritual exercises very *difficult;* at least they have *some tendency* that way. Now if the above reasoning be just, it will follow, that in proportion to the *degree* of that difficulty, the subjects thereof ought to be excused in the omission of spiritual exercises.

P. supposes in this case there is no difference between natural and moral inability; and his argument proceeds all along upon this supposition. Now we know that in all cases where impediments are simply natural, it is not at all more evident that an entire inability amounts to a full excuse; than that a *great difficulty* excuses in a *great degree*. If therefore such reasoning be just, it must follow that men are excusable in exact proportion to the strength of their evil propensities; that is, they are excusable in just the same proportion as, according to the common sense of mankind, they are internally wicked, or culpable!

If we suppose a man, for example, in his younger years to have had but very little aversion to Christ, and his way of salvation; he is then *exceedingly wicked* for not coming to him. As he advances in years, his evil propensities increase, and his aversion becomes stronger and stronger; by this time his guilt is *greatly diminished*. And if it were possible for him to become so much of a devil as for his prejudices to be utterly invincible, he would then, according to P. be *altogether innocent!**

P. thinks this matter so plain, it seems, that he even tells his correspondent, "neither he, nor his friend (meaning me) could imagine that a command given, and not obeyed, renders the subjects of such command criminal, unless these subjects have power,

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* See president Edwards on the *Will*. Part. III. Sect. III.

or might have power to obey such command." (43) If by power he had meant natural ability, I should certainly have accorded with the sentiment; but it is very plain he means to apply it to moral as well as natural ability; and then he is certainly mistaken. For I not only can imagine that to be the case, but do verily believe it. Yea, I can scarcely think that P. himself can believe the contrary; at least he will not, he cannot abide by its just and necessary consequences. If what he says is true, it is either *possible that no offences should come*, or else no *woe* is due *to those by whom they come.** It must likewise follow, that every man has, or might have power to live intirely blameless through life, both towards God and towards man; for be it so that some degree of imperfection will continue to attend him, yet that imperfection being supposed to be a "necessary effect" of the fall, it cannot be *blame-worthy:* (67) and so it is possible for a fallen son of Adam to live and die blameless, and consequently to appear in his own righteousness without *fault* before the throne of God. These consequences, however anti-scriptural and absurd, are no more than must inevitably follow from the position of *Philanthropos.*

"According to my principles, I am told, men's moral inability is *invincible.*" (68) If I have used that term in the former treatise or the present, it is for want of a better. It is easy to see that my princi-

* Luke xvii. 1.

ples do not so much maintain that the moral inability of men is such as to render all their attempts to overcome it vain, as that sin hath such a dominion in their heart as to *prevent* any *real attempts* of that nature being made. If a whole country were possessed by a foreign enemy, and all its posts and avenues occupied by his forces, and all the inhabitants dead that so much as wished to oppose him; in that case to say his power was become invincible by any opposition *from that country* would hardly be proper, seeing all opposition *there* is subdued, and all the country are of one side. *Invincible* is a relative term, and supposes an opposition made, though made in vain. But moral inability is of such a nature where it *totally* prevails, as to prevent all real and direct opposition being made. It is the same thing as for the hearts of the sons of men to be *fully* set in them to do evil, to be *full of evil* while they live, for every imagination of the heart to be *only evil*, and that continually.* Now if we say this moral indisposition is invincible, it is for the want of a better term. What we affirm is this rather, that suppose it were conquerable, there is nothing of real good in the sinner's heart to conquer it. If sin is conquered by any efforts of ours, it must be by such as are *voluntary*. It is not enough that we be "rational beings," and that conscience suggests to us what ought to be; (66) we must *choose* to go about it, and that in good earnest, or we shall

* Eccl. viii. 11. xix. 3. Gen. vi. 5.

never effect it. But where the thoughts of the *heart* are only evil, and that continually, it is supposing a plain contradiction to suppose ourselves the subjects of any such volition or desire.

III. But it will be said, though moral inability is total, yet it is conquerable BY THE GRACE OF GOD; and this grace is given to every man in the world, or would be given, were he to ask it; and this it is which renders men inexcusable. (66). Without this, P. avows, that "any man, be his practices as vile as they may, may excuse himself from blame; and all real good whatever may be denied to be the duty of an unprincipled mind." (59) This seems to be his last and grand resort, and what he often dwells upon. The discussion of this subject will finish the present section.

I bless God that moral inability is indeed conquerable by the grace of God, though I question whether it is or ever was conquered by what P. calls by that name. But suppose, for argument's sake, we grant him his hypothesis, I question if it will answer his end. This grace is either *actually given* to all mankind, or *would be given* upon their application. If actually given, I should be glad to know what it is. Is it light in the understanding, or love in the heart? Is it any thing, or productive of any thing that is truly good? If so, how does this accord with the description given of men, that their minds are *darkness*, their hearts *enmity*, and that there is none of them that *doth good*, no not one?* Or is it something for which

* Eph. v. 8. Rom. viii. 7. iii. 12.

there is no name, a sort of *seed* sown in the heart, which if neglected will perish, but if watered by human industry will be productive? If so, the difficulty is not at all removed, for then, the question is, whether a mind so depraved as to be *totally* unable to do any thing spiritually good, will ever be inclined to improve that grace, to water the seed so as that it may bring forth fruit?

If the last member of the position be adopted, viz. that all mankind *might have* grace sufficient to overcome their moral inability if they would apply for it, still the question returns, will a mind *totally* destitute of any thing spiritually good, and *fully* set upon doing evil, apply to God for grace to such an end? Is it not inconsistent for a tree that is *wholly* evil to bring forth good fruit? Or are we to imagine after all, that satan will rise up against himself? To apply to God in any right manner for grace for the cure of an evil propensity, must suppose a desire to have that propensity cured; but to suppose a person totally under the dominion of a propensity, and at the same time properly and directly desiring to have such propensity removed, is what some people would call by the hard name of self-contradiction.*

Farther, I query if the hypothesis of P. instead of answering his end, will not be found subversive of itself, and destructive of his main design. Making this supposed grace the only thing which constitutes

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* See president *Edwards* on the *Will*, part III. sect. V. on sincere endeavours.

men accountable beings, is making it DEBT surely, rather than GRACE. I have too good an opinion of the humility and integrity of P. to imagine he *intends* merely to compliment the Almighty in calling it *grace;* but I think it becomes him to examine his scheme, and see whether it amounts to any thing less. Grace is free favour towards the unworthy. It supposes the subject destitute of all claim whatever, and the author to be free to give or to with-hold. But all that this supposed grace amounts to, is not to prove that God has done any thing more than he was bound to do; but barely that he has done what we had a right to expect, or else to be at liberty to throw off his yoke with impunity. It does not, therefore, at all prove Jehovah to be *gracious;* if it serves for any thing, it can be only to justify his character from the imputation of *injustice* and *cruelty*, or from being what P. calls " a merciless tyrant." (88)

But farther, I question if even *this* end will be answered by it. I question if it will not be found, upon the principles and reasonings of P. that this supposed grace, instead of being any real favour towards mankind, is the greatest curse that could ever befal them. If Christ had never come, and no grace had been given in him, then, according to the reasoning of P. men had never been responsible for any part of their conduct. They would, 'tis true, have been born depraved, and lived depraved; but having no *power* to avoid it, or to free themselves from it, " where," he asks, " would have been their criminality?" (44, 57.) He does not scruple to acknowledge, that if no

grace were provided, " any man, be his practices as vile as they might, might excuse himself from blame; and all real good whatever might be denied to be the duty of an unprincipled mind." (59)—Now if things are so, that men, without the bestowment of grace, would have been free from criminality; surely the righteousness of God could never have suffered them to be sent to hell, and the goodness of God we may suppose would have raised them to eternal life; and so they might have been innocent and happy if Jesus had never died: but now, alas! in consequence of his coming, and of *grace* being given them to deliver them from something wherein they were never blameworthy; now they lie all exposed to inexcusable blame and everlasting ruin!!!*

P. speaks of the " Almighty and all gracious God being represented as *contriving* to make poor sinners miserable under the colour of invitations; &c." (45)

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* When I consider the above positions, I am entirely at a loss to understand the following passage, " It is granted, Sir, that God might justly have left man in the state he was born in, and brought into by Adam's sin, whatever state that be." (57) What such a state would have been, P. does not determine; he seems here to consider it, however, as deserving some *sort of punishment*, otherwise there is no meaning in that comparitive mode of speaking which he so frequently uses of being *punished* MORE *severely*. But does P. really mean what he writes? Compare this passage with what he hath asserted in pages 44, 57, 59, and it amounts to nothing less than this, *that it would have been just in God to have punished the human race by acquitting them of all blame, and bringing them in guiltless!*

I delight not in the use of such expressions; they appear to me, to say the least, as bordering on irreverence. But if such language must be used, and such consequences urged; let the reader judge to whose sentiments they belong, to those of P. or mine.

That Christ died for our SINS *according to the scriptures*, is allowed by P. and I should think by every christian, to be a fundamental doctrine of christianity. (34, note.) The apostle, doubtless, considered this, and his resurrection from the dead in such a light, when he concluded that if the opposite were true, the *faith* of the Corinthians *was vain*, *and they were yet in their sins*.* But fundamental as these sentiments are, if the scheme of P. be true, the first of them must of necessity be false. If his sentiments are true, Christ did not come into the world TO SAVE MEN FROM SIN, BUT RATHER TO PUT THEM INTO A CAPACITY OF SINNING; AS IT IS IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS DEATH, AND THAT ALONE, THAT GUILT BECOMES CHARGEABLE UPON THEM. So far from being *yet in their sins*, if Christ had neither died for them, nor risen from the dead, they had then been incapable of sinning at all; and ought not to have been accountable to God, let their practices have been what they might!

It is possible the reader may be startled at the imputation of such consequences as the above; and tru-

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* 1 Cor. xv. 3—17.

ly they are of such a nature as ought to startle not the reader only. But are not things carried to an extreme? If they are, it is unknown to me; but let us go over the ground again, and see. P. supposes, 1. That Man was so reduced by the fall, as to be "*really and totally unable to do good.*" (57) 2. That if he had been left in this condition, he would not have been to blame for not doing it, but that his inability would have been his excuse. (44, 57, 59.) Yea, "let his practices have been as vile as they might, he would have been excusable." (59) But, 3. That God has not left him in this condition. He hath sent his Son to die for all men universally; and by giving, or at least offering his Spirit to all men, he removes the inability which they derived from the fall; and from hence they become accountable beings, and are inexcusable if they do not comply with things spiritually good. (66) If words have any meaning, I should think these are the real sentiments of P. Now if these are true, it must follow, that *Christ did not die for the* SINS *of any man*, except it were Adam, since none of the fallen race could have *sinned* if he had never died. The reasonings of P. suppose that men are not chargeable with *sin*, or *blame-worthiness*, independent of the death of Christ, and the grace of the gospel; and if so, it could not be to atone for *sin* that he laid down his life, for prior to the consideration of this, there was no sin for which he could have to atone.

If I have unhappily adopted an indefensible mode of reasoning, let it be fairly confuted. Till I see that

done, I shall continue to think the sentiments of P. on this subject eversive of one of the fundamental principles of christianity.

There is a thought on which P. repeatedly insists. It is this, that " supposing it to be just to punish men eternally for that depravity which they derive from their first parents;" (this however is more than he will in fact allow) " yet it is very hard that any *addition* should be made to the obligations they lie under, and that punishments should be annexed to these obligations which they have no power either to regard or avoid." (45) He often speaks of the injustice of punishing those who enjoy gospel opportunities, and neglect them, " *more severely* than if they had never enjoyed them, if they had not *power* sufficient to have embraced them." (57) To all which I reply.

It seems if men had but *power* to comply, all this injustice would subside. Well, we affirm they *have power*. They have the same natural ability to embrace Christ as to reject him. They *could* comply with the gospel *if they would*. Is any thing more necessary to denominate them accountable beings? We believe not; and perhaps in fact P. believes the same. In some places however, he appears to think there is. Well, what is it? If any thing, it must be an *inclination* as well as an ability. Now would P. be willing to have his objection so stated, that it is hard that new obligations should be laid upon persons who have no *inclination* to what they already lie under? If so, it will afford a powerful plea to final

unbelievers at the last day. No, it will be said, *they might have had an inclination if they would:* but let it be considered, whether any thing like this is revealed in scripture, and whether it is not repugnant even to common sense. *If they had been willing, they might, or would have been willing*—that is the amount of it, which is saying just nothing at all. But passing this—

Whoever be right, he or I, neither of us ought to take our own hypothesis for granted, and proceed to charge the consequences upon the other. And yet this is what P. has done. The whole force of his reasoning in p. 45. and divers other places; rests upon the supposition of that being true which is a matter of dispute; viz. that natural power is not power, and is not sufficient to denominate men accountable beings. His statement of the above objection takes this for granted; whereas this is what we positively deny, maintaining that natural power *is* power, properly so called, and is to all intents and purposes, sufficient to render men accountable beings—that the want of inclination in a sinner is of no account with the governor of the world—that he proceeds in his requirements, and that it is right he should proceed, in the same way as if no such disinclination existed. If this can be solidly disproved, let it; it will be time enough then to exclaim of injustice and cruelty, and to compare the Divine Being to an Egyptian task-master, or to a "wicked Rehoboam." (92.)*

* I wish P. had spoken of the Divine Being here, and in some other places in language more becoming a worm of the

The question appears to me to be this; *Is it unrighteous in God to do right, because he knows men will be sure from thence to take occasion to do wrong, and aggravate their own destruction?* God knew assuredly that all the messages sent to *Pharoah* would only harden his heart, and aggravate his ruin. "I am *sure*, said Jehovah to his servant, that the king of Egypt will not let you go; no, not by a mighty hand, (Exod. iii. 19.) And yet he did not in the least hold himself obliged, either to give him grace that should soften his heart, or to discontinue his messages, which, without such grace, were certain to issue in the aggravation of his ruin. But Pharoah could have complied if he would—We grant it, and so could they who reject Christ. They are under no other necessity in the one case than Pharaoh was in the other.

Whatever dissimilarity there may be between the condition of *fallen angels*, and that of sinners in the present life, who will finally perish; the case of the former sufficiently serves to refute the supposition of P. The redemption of man has certainly been an

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dust. I have no objection to the consequences of a sentiment being fairly pointed out, and thoroughly urged; but suppose such a consequence as this had been just, it might have been urged in more sober language. Surely it is too much for a creature to talk of his Creator being wicked! But I have no conviction at the present of such a consequence being just. If it is, it must be upon this supposition, that not *capacity* and *opportunity*, but *inclination* to do good, is analogous to the straw with which the Israelities ought to have been furnished, for the making of brick.

occasion of a world of guilt to those revolted spirits. Had not Christ come, satan could never have had an opportunity to have sinned in the manner he has, in tempting him, instigating his murderers, and all along opposing the spread of his kingdom. But would it be right therefore for satan, in behalf of himself and his associates, to plead in this manner at the great assize?—"Why were we not confined to the deep? Seeing no mercy was designed for us, where was the justice of suffering us to range in the world, where it was certain we should only increase our guilt, and so be punished the *more severely?* Surely our first revolt was enough for us, without being suffered to go any farther."

If the reasoning of P. on this subject, particularly in p. 57, prove any thing, it will prove not merely that sinners ought not to be punished *more severely;* but that, if it were not for grace provided for them, they ought not to be punished *at all.* In that case, one should think the greatest grace would have been to have let them alone, and left them under the ruins of the fall; then had they been blameless, and harmless, without rebuke, and consequently unexposed to misery, either here or hereafter.

After all, I question if P. really means any thing more by his notion of grace, than we do by natural ability. We allow that men can come to Christ, and do things spiritually good *if they will.* He is not satisfied, it seems, with this; they must have something of *grace* given, or offered, or otherwise they cannot be accountable beings.—Well, what does it

all amount to? Does he mean that they must have something of real good, and holy inclination in them? I question if he will affirm this. Does he mean that this supposed grace does any thing *effectual* towards making them willing? no such thing. What then does he mean? Nothing that I can comprehend more than this, that men may come to Christ *if they will.* His whole scheme of grace, therefore, amounts to no more than our natural ability. We admit that men in general are possessed of this ability; but then we have no notion of calling it *grace.* If we must be accountable beings, we apprehend this to be no more than an exercise of *justice.* And in fact our opponents; whatever terms they use, think the same; for though they call it grace, and so would seem to mean that it is something for which we had no claim, yet the constant drift of their writings proves that they mean no such thing: for they all along plead that it would be unjust and cruel in God to with-hold it, and yet to treat them as accountable beings. P. does not scruple to compare it to the conduct of an Egyptian task-master, who required brick without straw. What end, therefore, they can have in calling this power by the name of *grace* it is difficult to say, unless it be to avoid the odium of seeming to ascribe to divine grace nothing at all.

For my part, I apprehend whatever grace is provided for, or bestowed upon men, they are altogether inexcusable without any consideration of that nature whatever—Some of the principal reasons for which are as follow. 1. The *term grace* implies that the

subject is totally unworthy, altogether inexcusable, and destitute of every claim; and all this previous to, and independent of, its bestowment; otherwise grace is no more grace. 2. The heathen in their ignorance of God are said to be *without excuse;* and that not from the consideration of grace bestowed upon them, unless by grace is meant simply the means of knowledge by the works of creation, answering to the testimony of conscience within them. That which may be known of God, says the apostle, is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and Godhead—*so that they are without excuse.** 3. The manner in which the godly have prayed for *grace* to fulfil their *duty*, and preserve them from *sin*, shews that they considered themselves as obliged to duty, and as liable to sin, antecedent to its bestowment. "Thou hast *commanded us* that we should keep thy precepts diligently; O, that my ways were *directed* to keep thy statutes! We know not what we should pray for as we *ought*; but the Spirit itself *helpeth our infirmities*. *Hold up* my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps *slip not*. O, that thou wouldest *keep me from evil*, that it may not grieve me! *Keep back* thy servant from presumptuous *sins*—*then shall I be in-*

* Rom. i. 19, 20.

*nocent from the great transgression.** 4. Fallen angels are under a moral inability to love God, or do any thing that is really good; and no grace is provided for them, yet they are without excuse.

P. informs us of some unsuccessful conferences which he has frequently had with unconverted sinners, in endeavouring to fix blame upon their consciences upon Calvanistic principles. (60.) If I had had the pleasure of being a stander-by in one or more of those conferences, I imagine I should have seen a very *easy* conquest; and no wonder, people seldom manage those principles which they do not believe, to the best advantage. We see this exemplified too often where a controversy is written in the form of a dialogue.

I do not apprehend P. intended to plead the cause of the infernal legions in their *continued* enmity to, and rebellion against, the Most High; but if I am not greatly mistaken, the purport of his reasoning is fully of that tendency. There is only one particular wanting, viz. deriving their depravity from a predecessor, to render all their iniquities, according to his reasoning, entirely excusable. They cannot *now* find in their hearts to do aught but evil; and no grace being bestowed upon them to deliver them, wherein can consist their blame? 'Tis true each of them brought his depravity upon himself, without deriving it from another; and this may prove them to have been to

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* Psal. cxix. 4. 5. Rom. viii. 26. Psal. xvii. 5. 1 Chron. iv. 10. Psal. xix. 13.

blame in that their *first revolt*, but not *in any thing that follows*. They sinned to be sure *at* the beginning; but if the reasoning of P. be just, I do not see how they can have sinned *from* it. He insists upon it in these cases there is no difference between a natural and moral inability, "for what we cannot do, we cannot do." (60.) Now in all cases of natural inability, the party is excusable, even though he may by his own fault have brought that inability upon himself. If a man, by debauchery or excess, bring upon himself the loss of his limbs to such a degree as utterly to disable him from all future employment; it is not *then* his duty to do the same business which it was before. His inability is really an excuse. 'Tis true it does not excuse his former intemperance; for that he was to blame: but it excuses his present cessation from business; for that he is not to blame, nor can any person blame him. This will hold good in all cases of natural inability whatever; and if there is no difference between that and what is of a moral nature, the same reasoning will apply to the fallen angels. They were certainly to blame for their first revolt, by which they contracted their inability; but how can they be to blame for continuing what they are? Their propensity to evil is now become invincible; and no grace is bestowed upon them to deliver them from it: how then can they be to blame? And if truth is of a like force in all places and at all times, why should not the plough-boy's argument, as it is called, "*what we cannot do, we cannot do*," be as

irrefragable in the language of an apostate angel, as of an apostate man?

SECTION THIRD.

ON FAITH IN CHRIST BEING A REQUIREMENT OF THE MORAL LAW.

I FIND it difficult to come at the real sentiments of P. touching the moral law. Sometimes he speaks of it as "an invariable rule of human conduct, and infallible test of right and wrong;" (67.) at other times he speaks as if it were wholly abrogated; as if "final misery was not brought upon sinners by their transgression of the law, but by their rejection of the overtures of mercy." (86.) In his ninth letter, he admits that men "are bound, as subjects of God's moral government, to embrace whatever he reveals." (89.) One should think if so, a rejection of the overtures of mercy must *itself* be a transgression of the law. And yet he all along speaks of our obligations to obey the gospel, as arising, if not wholly, yet chiefly from the gospel itself. He does not seem willing to deny the thing in full, for he cautiously uses the terms "wholly and chiefly;" and yet if his arguments, especially from the contrary nature of the two dispensations, (90.) from the silence of scripture, &c. &c. prove any thing, they will prove that our

obligations to obey the gospel must arise wholly and *entirely* from the gospel itself, and not from the moral law.*

The purport of all the reasoning of P. on this subject, supposes that I maintain THAT MEN ARE EXHORTED AND INVITED TO SUCH AND SUCH THINGS, MERELY AS MATTER OF DUTY, WITHOUT ANY PROMISE OF SALVATION ON THEIR COMPLIANCE. Hence he speaks of "binding men down in chains of darkness," of their "seeking the salvation of their souls in vain," (46) with various things of the kind: whereas I have given sufficient proof of the contrary throughout the former treatise; particularly in p. 157—159. It is all along supposed that eternal salvation is promised by a faithful God to any and every exercise of what is spiritually good; and that if every sinner who hears the gospel were truly to come to Christ for salvation, every such sinner would undoubtedly be saved.

It must be upon that mistaken supposition that P. denies the gospel upon our principles to be in itself "good news," (92) or in its own nature a "real privilege." (87.) But unless the aversion of men's hearts to embracing the gospel (if grace is not provided to enable them so to do) makes that to be no privilege which would otherwise be so, such a consequence

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* That there is a sense in which our obligation to comply with the gospel does arise from the gospel itself, is allowed. On this subject I have given my thoughts in the former treatise, p. 57.

cannot justly be imputed to our sentiments. This, however, will not be admitted: yet P. seems to take it for granted, and proceeds to draw consequences from it as an undoubted truth.

There is some force in what P. has advanced in p. 32, on the subject of *trust;* and for any thing I yet perceive, he is in the right in supposing that the venture of the four lepers into the Syrian camp could not properly be called by that name. It should be considered, however, that the above case which I produced for illustration, was not designed as a *perfect representation* of a sinner's application to Christ. I never supposed it possible for a soul to apply to Christ, and be disappointed. Whether the resolution of the lepers can be called *trust* or not, it never was my design to prove that a sinner has no greater encouragement in his application to Christ than they had in their proposed application to the Syrians. On the contrary, the purport of the argument in that place was thus expressed, 'If it would be right to venture, even in such a case as that, surely Christ's having promised, saying, "him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," cannot make it otherwise.' p. 133.

I admit there is no doubt of a sinner's acceptance, who from his heart applies at the feet of Christ, as one who is utterly lost, and righteously condemned: yet I do not feel the force of my opponent's censure, when speaking of coming to Christ with a *peradventure he will save my life*, he calls it the mere language of *heathenism*. (33.) A heathen's having used such

language does not prove it to be the mere language of *heathenism;* nor is it so. Peter exhorted the sorcerer, saying, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray to God, *if perhaps* the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."* Though there be no doubt of one who truly comes to Christ being accepted; yet there may be some doubt concerning a person's coming in the spirit of the gospel; and I believe it is not usual for a person on his first application to Christ, to be able to decide upon that matter. On these accounts I should think it is usual for a sinner on his first application to the Saviour, to pray to the Lord *if so be* that the evils of his heart and life may be forgiven him. It is not the way of a contrite sinner to come as a claimant, but as a suppliant: *he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.*†

Trust, according to my present apprehensions, when used to express faith in Christ, refers like that to a divine *testimony* or *promise*. That for which every sinner who hears the gospel ought to trust in Christ is this; that *if he truly come to him, he shall surely be accepted of him* for this is *testified*, or *promised*. He ought not so to trust in Christ as to depend upon being saved by him whether he come to him in the spirit of the gospel or not, for that would be trusting in a falsehood; but so as to give up every false object of confidence, and make trial of the divine veracity.

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* Acts viii. 22. † Cam. iii. 29.

If there is any difference between the manner in which a sinner *ought* to trust in Christ, and in which a saint *does* trust in him; it appears to be this; the former ought to trust in God's promise, that *if he come, he shall be accepted*, and so make the trial; the latter may be conscious that he *has come to Christ*, and *does* fall in with his gospel and government; and if so, he trusts in his promise for *the happy issue*. There are seasons, however, in which true saints are in great darkness about their evidences for glory. At those times they find it necessary to exercise renewed acts of trust on Christ in the manner *first* described. Not possessing a certain consciousness that they do fall in with his gospel and government, all they can do is to consider that the promise is still in force. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out;" and so make trial afresh of the Redeemer's veracity.

P. seems to think that his sentiments lay a proper foundation for trust, to every poor sinner; and that our's do not. But what has any sinner to trust in upon his principles more than upon our's? According to our principles, any sinner may trust that he shall be saved, *if he come to Christ:* and what do his do more? They do not warrant a sinner to trust that he shall be saved *whether he come to Christ or not;* for though P. supposes Christ died for all, yet he maintains that many of those for whom he died will finally perish. I see no advantages whatever therefore, attending his scheme, in laying a more solid and extensive foundation for a sinner's trust than our's.

If I am not very much mistaken, P. has greatly confounded two very different things, viz. an *obligation* and an *encouragement* to believe. The one I suppose arises from the moral law, the other from the gospel. That the *encouragements* held out to sinners to return to God by Jesus Christ belong to the law, is what I never affirmed. P. has quoted various scriptures in his *ninth* letter of this nature, and these doubtless are the language of the gospel. But the question is, does our *obligation* to believe arise from these encouragements, or from the *injunctions* with which they are connected? The encouragement of the prodigal to return and make a frank acknowledgment to his father, arose from his father's well-known clemency, and there being bread enough in his house, and to spare; but that was not the ground of his obligation. It had been right and fit for him to have returned, whether such a ground of encouragement had existed or not.

As to those encouragements being improper without *a provision of mercy;* if it were possible for any returning sinner to be refused admittance for want of a sufficiency in the death of Christ, this might be admitted, but not else. And if by a provision of mercy is meant no more than a provision of pardon to all who believe, and supposing, for argument's sake, every man in the world should return to God in Christ's name, that they would all be accepted, I have no objection to it. At the same time it is insisted that no man ever did, or ever can find in his heart to come to Christ, but whom the Father draws. But

more of this hereafter: at present I shall offer a few arguments for the following position;—Though the *encouragements* of a sinner to come to Christ arise wholly from the gospel, yet his *obligation* so to do arises from the moral law.

I. All obligation must arise from *some law*. If therefore our obligations to believe in Christ do not arise from the moral law, they must arise from the gospel as a *new law:* but the gospel, as P. admits, is simply *good news;* (5) and *news*, whether good or bad, relates not to precepts or injunctions, but to *tidings* proclaimed.

II. Sin is defined by an inspired apostle to be "the transgression of the law."* If this be a perfect definition, it must extend to *all sin*, and consequently to *unbelief*, or a rejection of God's way of salvation. But if unbelief be a transgression of the law, faith, which is the opposite, must be one of it's requirements.

III. If love to God *includes* faith in Christ wherever he is revealed by the gospel, then the moral law, which expressly requires the former, must also require the latter. In proof that love to God includes faith in Christ, I ask leave to refer the reader to p. 53—56, and 120—123, of the former treatise.

P. allows my "reasonings on the extent of the moral law, in p. 188, 189, are very conclusive;" but what he calls "analogical reasonings in this and other

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* 1 John iii. 4.

places, from the law to the gospel, he cannot think to be equally conclusive, unless the dispensation of the law, and that of the gospel were the same." (67) If I understand what he refers to by analogical reasonings, it is the argument contained in those pages to which I have just now referred the reader. I might here ask, Is what was advanced in those pages answered? I do not recollect that any thing like an answer to it is attempted by any one of my opponents. If the reasoning is inconclusive, I should suppose it is capable of being detected. Let P. or any other person prove, if he is able, that supreme love to God would not *necessarily* lead a fallen creature, who has heard the gospel of Christ, to embrace him as God's way of salvation; or let him invalidate those arguments in the pages referred to, in which the contrary is maintained. Let him consider also if he succeed, whether he will not in so doing invalidate the reasoning of our Lord to the Jews—" I know you, that ye have not *the love of God* in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye *receive me not*."*

That the law and the gospel are two very different dispensations is allowed. The one is a mere inefficient rule, requiring what is right, but giving no disposition to a compliance; the other provides for the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, by which we are renewed in the spirit of our mind. The gospel makes effectual provision for the producing of those dispo-

* John v. 42, 43.

sitions which the law simply requires. The law condemns the sinner, the gospel justifies him. On these accounts the former is fitly called *the* LETTER *which* KILLETH, and the latter *the* SPIRIT *which* GIVETH LIFE.* For these reasons also with others, the gospel is a *better* covenant. All this may be allowed without making it a new law, requiring a kind of obedience that shall be within the compass of a carnal mind, and different in its nature from that required by the moral law.

IV. Unbelievers will be accused and convicted by MOSES; their unbelief must therefore be a breach of the law of Moses. After our Lord had complained of the Jews that *they would not come unto him that they might have life*—that though he was come in his *Father's name, yet they received him not;* he adds, *Do not think that I will accuse you unto the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even* MOSES, *in whom ye trust: for had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me.*† It is very plain I think from this passage, that the thing for which Moses would accuse them was a rejection of Christ and the way of salvation by him, which, according to our Lord's reasoning, implied a rejection of the writings of Moses.‡ From hence, therefore, it is inferred, that a compliance with

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* 2 Cor. iii. 6. † John v. 45.

‡ By Moses' accusing them, I apprehend is meant the *law* of Moses, which condemns the Jews to this present time for not believing in that prophet whom Moses foretold; Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

the gospel is what the law of Moses requires, and a non-compliance with it is a matter for which that law will accuse and condemn.*

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* If I understand P. he considers the moral law as a system of government, now no longer in force; and the gospel as a new system of government, more suited to the state of fallen creatures, which hath taken place of it—for he supposes that "final misery is not now brought upon men by their transgression of the moral law, but by their rejection of the overtures of mercy," (86.) Final misery we are sure must be brought upon men by *sin*, be it against what law it may, and whatever law it is, the breach of which subjects us to final misery, that must be the law that we are under. If this is not the moral law, then men are not under that law, nor can it be to us "the standard of right and wrong." If the gospel be a new system of government taking place of the moral law, then all the precepts, prohibitions, promises and threatnings, the neglect of which subjects men to final misery, must belong to the former, and not to the latter.

How far these sentiments accord with the scripture account of either law or gospel, let the reader judge. Let it be considered also whether it is not much more consistent with both, to conceive of the former as the guardian of the latter, enjoining whatever regards are due to it, and punishing every instance of neglect and contempt of it. Such a view of things accords with the passage in John v just-cited, and is in no wise contradicted by those scriptures to which we are referred in p. 86. On the contrary, one of those passages, viz. 2 Thes. i. 8. in my opinion, tends to establish it, and is in direct contradiction to the hypothesis of P. Vengeance is said to be taken on men not *merely* for their disobedience to the gospel, but as well for their *ignorance of God*, which is distinguished from the other, and is manifestly a breach of the moral law.

P. has brought many proofs of the invitations of scripture being *enforced* on gospel principles. This is a matter I should never have thought of denying. But if an invitation to believe in Christ, enforced by gospel motives, will prove that faith is not a requirement of the moral law, then invitations to love God, to fear him, and to lie low before him, enforced in the same manner, will prove the same of them. Love, fear, and humility are enforced upon gospel principles, as well as faith in Christ. Things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and of which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, are prepared for them who *love God*. The exhortations to *fear* God are not more numerous than the promises of mercy to those who are of such a spirit. Men are exhorted to *humble* themselves under the mighty hand of God, with the encouragement that he will lift them up. These are all gospel motives, yet P. will not deny that the dispositions enforced are requirements of the moral law. Even *relative duties*, such as those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, &c. which certainly are of a moral nature, are nevertheless enforced by gospel motives.

But " how can the gospel answer the end of recovering miserable men," it is asked, " if it contain *new injunctions*, equally impossible, if not more so, than the moral law itself, and these injunctions enforced by more awful punishments?" (93.) I might ask in return, how can the gospel have a tendency to

recover *sinful* men from their *evil propensities*, if it is a kind of law which requires only such exercises with which those propensities may consist? It can have no such tendency, unless tolerating an evil has a tendency to destroy it.

But is not the gospel adapted as a mean to recover lost sinners? Yes, it is. It exhibits *the evil of sin* by the cross of Christ in stronger colours than all the curses of the law could paint it; and so has a tendency, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, *to convince the world of sin.* Nor is this all; it exhibits a *saviour* to the guilty soul to keep him from despair, which at the same time tends to conquer his heart with a view of God's free and self-moved goodness. A person thus conquered would admire the free and sovereign grace of the gospel, but he would abhor the thought of a gospel that should make Jehovah stoop to the vile *inclinations* of his apostate creatures. His prayer would be, not, "Incline thy testimonies to my heart, but my heart to thy testimonies."

But "could the gospel have a tendency to recover lost sinners if it contained *new injunctions* equally impossible, if not more so, than the moral law itself?" I own I think it could not. And who supposes it could? Surely P. must have here forgot himself. Does he not know that those are his own sentiments rather than mine, so far however as relates to the gospel containing *new injunctions.* I suppose the gospel, strictly speaking, to contain no injunctions at all, but merely the good tidings of salvation by

Jesus Christ; and that whatever precepts or injunctions are to be found respecting its being embraced, they are the diversified language of the moral law, which obliges men, as P. himself allows, to "embrace whatever God reveals." (89.)

Sometimes the word *gospel* is used in a large sense for the whole of the christian dispensation as contained in the New Testament, or the whole of that religion taught by Christ and his apostles, whether doctrinal or practical. In this use of the word we sometimes speak of *the precepts of the gospel.* But when the term gospel is used in a strict sense, it denotes merely the *good news* proclaimed to lost sinners through the mediation of Christ. In this view it stands opposed to the moral law, and in itself contains no injunctions at all. If the gospel were a new system of government taking place of the moral law, one should think there would be no farther need of the latter, whereas Christ in his sermon on the mount maintained its perpetuity, and largely explained and enforced its precepts. *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.**

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* Rom. iii. 31.

SECTION FOURTH.

ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

THE extent of Christ's death is well known to have been a matter of great controversy. For my part, I cannot pretend to so much reading upon the subject as to be fully acquainted with the arguments used on either side. If I write any thing about it, it will be a few plain thoughts, chiefly the result of reading the sacred scriptures.

I think no one can imagine that I am under any obligation from the laws of controversy to follow P. into a long and laboured defence of the limited extent of Christ's death. All that can be reasonably thought incumbent upon me, is to treat of it so far as respects its consistency or inconsistency with indefinite invitations. On this score I might very well be excused from entering upon any defence of the subject itself, or answering the arguments advanced for the contrary. Whatever notice is taken of either, will be rather in compliance with what has been done by my opponent, than in conformity to the laws of disputation.

I suppose P. is not ignorant that Calvinists in *general* have considered the particularity of redemption as consisting not in the *degree* of Christ's sufferings, as though he must have suffered more if more had

been finally saved, or in any *insufficiency* that attended them; but in the sovereign purpose and design of the Father and the Son, whereby they were constituted or appointed the price of redemption, the objects of that redemption ascertained, and the ends to be answered by the whole transaction determined. They suppose the sufferings of Christ, in themselves considered, are of *infinite* value, sufficient to have saved all the world, and a thousand worlds, if it had pleased God to have constituted them the price of their redemption, and made them effectual to that end. Farther, whatever difficulties there may appear in these subjects, they in general suppose that there is in the death of Christ a sufficient ground for indefinite calls, and universal invitations; and that there is no mockery or insincerity in the Holy One in any of these things.*

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* "The obedience and sufferings of Christ, says WITSIUS, considered in themselves, are, on account of the infinite dignity of the person, of that value as to have been sufficient for redeeming not only all and every man in particular, but many myriads besides, had it so pleased God and Christ that he should have undertaken and satisfied for them." And again, "The obedience and sufferings of Christ are of such worth, that all without exception who come to him, may find perfect salvation in him: and it was the will of God that this truth should without distinction be proposed both to them that are to be saved, and to them that are to perish; with a *charge* not to neglect so great salvation, but to repair to Christ with true contrition of soul; and with a most *sincere* declaration that all who come to him shall find salvation in him. John vi. 40." Economy, vol I. chap. IX. To the same purpose speaks PETER DU MOULIN in his Anato-

These views of the subject accord with my own. I know not but that there is the same objective fulness and sufficiency in the obedience and sufferings of Christ, for the salvation of sinners, as there is in the power of the Holy Spirit for their renovation; both are infinite, yet both are applied under the direction of infinite wisdom, and uncontrolable sovereignty. It is allowed that the death of Christ has opened a way whereby God can consistently with his justice, forgive any sinner whatever, who returns to him by Jesus Christ. If we were to suppose, for argument's sake, that all the inhabitants of the globe should thus return, it is supposed not one soul need be sent away for want of a sufficiency in Christ's death to render his pardon and acceptance consistent with the rights of justice. But great and necessary as this mercy is, if nothing more than this had been done, not one of the human race had ever been saved. It is necessary to our salvation that a *way* and an *highway* to God should be opened: Christ is such a way; and is as free for any sinner to walk in as any highway whatever from one place to another; but considering the depravity of human nature, it is equally necessary that some effectual provision should be made for our *walking* in that way.* We conceive

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my of Arminianism, chap. XXVII. § 9. and Dr. Owen in his Death of Death, book IV. chap. I. Also in his Display of Arminianism, ch. IX.

* I use the metaphor of a *way* the rather because it conveys an idea sufficiently clear; and is frequently applied to Christ in the scriptures. John xiv. 4, 5, 6. Isa. xxxv. 8. Jer. vi. 16.

that the Lord Jesus Christ made such a provision by his death, thereby procuring the certain bestowment of faith as well as all other spiritual blessings which follow upon it—that in regard of all the *sons* who are finally brought to glory, he was the *surety* or *captain* of their salvation—that their salvation was properly speaking, the end or design of his death. And herein we suppose consists the particularity of redemption.

I think I might reduce all that is necessary to be said upon this subject to two questions—*First*, Had our Lord Jesus Christ any *absolute determination* in his death to save any of the human race? *Secondly*, Supposing such a determination to exist concerning some which doth not exist concerning others, is this consistent with indefinite calls, and universal invitations? The discussion of these two questions will contain the substance of what I shall advance upon the subject; but as pretty much is required to be said, I shall subdivide the whole into *four* lesser sections.

§ I.

CONTAINING A DISCUSSION OF THE FIRST QUESTION, WHETHER OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HAD ANY ABSOLUTE DETERMINATION IN HIS DEATH TO SAVE ANY OF THE HUMAN RACE?

IF the affirmative of this question be proved, if it be shown that Christ *had* such an absolute purpose in his death, the limited extent of that purpose must follow of course. The reason is plain; an *absolute* purpose must be effectual. If it extended to all mankind, all mankind would certainly be saved. Unless therefore we will maintain the final salvation of all mankind, we must either suppose a limitation to the absolute determination of Christ to save, or deny any such determination to exist. The scheme of P. concurs with the latter, supposing that by the death of Christ a mere conditional provision of redemption is made for all mankind, I own I think otherwise; some of the reasons for which are as follows.

I. The *promises* made to Christ of the certain efficacy of his death.—One of our grand objections to the scheme of P. is, that in proportion as he extends the objects for whom Christ died beyond those who are actually saved, he diminishes the *efficacy* of his death, and renders all the promises concerning it of no account. His scheme, instead of making redemption universal, supposes that Christ's death did not properly redeem any man, nor render the salvation of any man a matter of certainty. It only procured an offer of redemp-

tion and reconciliation to mankind in general. We apprehend this is diminishing the efficacy of Christ's death, without answering any valuable end. Nor is this all, such an hypothesis appears to us utterly inconsistent with all those scriptures where God the Father is represented as *promising* his Son a reward for his sufferings in the salvation of poor sinners. God the Father engaged, saying, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast (or *shalt have*) the dew of thy youth." Yes, he engaged that he should "*see his seed*—that the pleasure of Jehovah should *prosper* in his hand"—that he should "*see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;* and by his knowledge," it was added, "shall my righteous servant *justify many*, FOR *he shall bear their iniquities.*" It was promised to Christ as the reward of his sufferings, that "Kings, should see, and arise; princes also, it was added, shall *worship*, because of the Lord that is *faithful*, and the Holy One of Israel shall choose thee: thus saith JEHOVAH, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to *establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;* that thou *mayest say to the prisoners go forth, and to them that sit in darkness, shew yourselves.*——*Behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim!*"* But what security, I ask, was

* Psal. cx. 3. Isai. liii. 10, 11. Isai. xlix. 7, 8, 9, 12.

there for the fulfilment of any of these promises but upon the supposition of the certain salvation of some of the human race? How could it be certain that Christ should *justify many*, if there was no effectual provision made that *any* should *know* and believe in him? and what propriety was there in assigning his *bearing their iniquities* as the REASON and EVIDENCE of it, if there is no necessary connection between our iniquities being borne away, and our persons being justified?

II. The *characters* under which Christ died—— He laid down his life as a *shepherd;* and for whom should we expect him to die *in that character?* For the *sheep*, no doubt. So the scriptures informs us—— "The good *Shepherd* giveth his life *for the sheep*. I lay down my life *for the sheep*." Those for whom Christ laid down his life are represented as being his sheep prior to their coming to the fold. "These, saith the blessed Redeemer, I *must bring; and they shall hear my voice;* and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."—As sheep are committed into the hands of a shepherd, and as he becomes responsible for their preservation or restoration; so Christ is represented as the *great Shepherd of the sheep*, whose blood was shed by *covenant;* and who, by fulfilling that covenant, was entitled to a discharge, which, as the representative of those for whom he died, he enjoyed in his resurrection from the dead.*

Again, Christ laid down his life as a *husband;* and

* John x. 11, 15, 16. Heb. xxx. 20.

for whom should we expect him to die in *that character?* For his bride surely. So the scriptures inform us—"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also *loved the Church, and gave himself for it.* The love of a husband, of which his death is here supposed to be the RESULT, is certainly *discriminating.* True, if it is said, but *the church* here means actual believers.—I reply, if they were actual believers, I should suppose they were not *unsanctified*, for faith purifies the heart; but Christ "gave himself that he *might* sanctify them with the washing of water by the word." Besides, He did not die for believers, *as such*, for *while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us:* but he died for the church *as such* considered. This is evident, for that his death is represented as resulting from his love which he exerciseth as a *husband.* I conclude, therefore, *the church* cannot, in this place, be understood of those only who actually believed.*

Again, Christ laid down his life as a SURETY. He is expressly called the *surety* of a better testament. He needed not to be a surety in behalf of the Father, to see to the fulfilment of his promises, seeing there was no possibility of his failing in what he had engaged to bestow; but there was danger on our part. Ought we not therefore to suppose that after the example of the high-priest under the law, Christ was a surety *for the people to God?* and if so, we cannot ex-

* Eph. v. 25, 26.

tend the objects for whom he was a surety beyond those who are finally saved, without supposing him to fail in what he has undertaken. In perfect conformity with these sentiments, the following scriptures represent our Lord Jesus, I apprehend, as having undertaken the certain salvation of all those for whom he lived and died. "It became him for whom are all things—*in bringing many sons unto glory*, to make the *captain of their salvation* perfect through sufferings. He died, not for the Jewish nation only, but that he might gather together in one *the children of God that were scattered abroad.* The *children* being partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same.—Here am I; and the *children* whom the Lord hath given me." Though we receive not the *power* or *privilege* to become the sons of God till after we believe in Christ; yet from *before the foundation of the world*, were we *predestinated to the adoption of children*, by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; and so in the esteem of God were considered as *children* even while as yet we lay *scattered abroad* under the ruins of the fall.*

Once more, Christ laid down his life as a *sacrifice of atonement;* and for whom did the priests under the law offer up the sacrifice? For those surely on whose behalf it was *sanctified* or set apart for that purpose. Some of the Jewish sacrifices were to make atonement for the sins of an individual, and others for the

* Heb. vii. 22. ii. 10, 13, 14. John xi. 52. i. 12. Eph. i. 4, 5.

sins of the whole nation; but every sacrifice had its special appointment, and was supposed to atone for the sins of those, and those only, on whose behalf it was offered. Now Christ being about to offer himself a sacrifice for sin, spake on this wise, "For *their sakes* I *sanctify* myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." For their sakes, as though he had said, who were *given* me of the Father, I set myself apart as a victim to vengeance, that I may consecrate and present them faultless before the presence of my Father.*

III. Such *effects* are ascribed to the death of Christ as do not terminate upon all mankind.—Those for whom Christ died are represented, as being *redeemed* by the shedding of his blood; "He hath *redeemed* us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."† But redemption includes *the forgiveness of sin;* (Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14.) and we know that to be a blessing which doth not terminate upon all mankind.‡

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* John xvii. 9, 19. † Gal. iii. 13.

‡ P. I suppose has felt the force of this reasoning heretofore; and therefore if I am rightly informed, he disowns a *universal redemption*, supposing that properly speaking Christ did not by laying down his life redeem any man—that no person can be said to have been redeemed till he has believed in Christ. It is true we receive this blessing when we believe, as we then *receive the atonement.* It is then that we *have* redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: but as it does not follow from our receiving the atonement when we believe, that atonement was not properly made when Christ hung upon the cross; so neither does it follow from our *having* redemption when we

Farther, it is not only ascribed to the death of Christ that pardon and acceptance are procured for all who return in his name, but that any return at all is attributed to the same cause. "He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from *all iniquity*, and *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* He gave himself for the church that he might *sanctify and cleanse it.* Our old man is said to be *crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.* But we see not these effects produced upon all mankind, nor are all mankind his peculiar people.*

IV. Christ is said to have borne the sins of *many;* and the blood of the new covenant was shed for *many*, for the remission of sins.' † The term *many*, it is allowed, when opposed to *one*, or to *few*, is sometimes used for an unlimited number: in one such

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believe that Christ did not properly redeem us when he laid down his life. Certain it is that the passage before cited (Gal. iii. 13.) refers not to what takes place on our believing, but to what was done at the time when Christ was made a curse for us by hanging upon the tree.

Though I apprehend for the reasons above, that a being redeemed from the curse of the law, does not necessarily suppose the subject to be in the actual possession of that blessing; yet to understand it of any thing less than such a virtual redemption as effectually secured our enjoyment of deliverance in the fulness of time, is to reduce it to no meaning at all. We must either allow it to mean thus much, or say with P. that Christ in laying down his life for us, did not redeem any man; but this at present appears to me to be contradicting rather than explaining scripture.

* Tit. ii. 14. Eph. v. 26. Rom. vi. 6.

† Isai. liii. 12. Matt. xxvi. 18.

instance it is put for all mankind. But it is self-evident that when no such opposition exists, it is always used for a limited number, and generally stands opposed to *all*. Who the "many" are in Isai. liii. 12. whose sins he bare, may be known by comparing it with the verse foregoing. "By his knowledge (that is, by the knowledge of him) shall my righteous servant *justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities*. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death: he was numbered with the transgressors, he bare the sin of *many*, and made intercession for the transgressors. There is no reason that I know of to be given why the "many" whose sins he bare should be understood of any other persons than the "many" who by his knowledge are justified, and who it must be allowed, are not all mankind.

V. The *intercession* of Christ, which is founded upon his death, and expressive of its grand design, extends not to all mankind. "I pray for them, says Christ, *I pray not for the world;* but for them whom thou hast *given* me, for they are thine."* The intercession of the priests under the law, so far as I know was always in behalf of the same persons for whom the oblation was offered. The persons prayed for by our Lord, must either mean those who were *then believers*, to the exclusion of the unbelieving world; or

* John xvii. 9.

all who *should* at any period of time believe, to the exclusion of those who should finally perish. That Christ prayed for those who then believed in him, is granted; but that his intercession was confined to them, and excluded all that did not believe in him, cannot be admitted, for the following reasons——1. Christ prays for all that were *given* him of the Father: but the term *given* is not applied to believers *as such*, for men are represented as *given* of the Father prior to their coming to Christ. John vi. 37. 2. The scripture account of Christ's intercession does not confine it to those who are actually believers, which it must have done if the sense I oppose be admitted. When he hung upon the cross, he prayed for his *enemies;* and herein most evidently fulfilled that prophecy, "He poured out his soul unto death, he was numbered with the transgressors, he bare the sin of many, and MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS. *—3. It is expressly said in verse 20, "Neither pray I for these alone, but them also who *shall believe* in me through their word."

VI. If the doctrine of eternal, personal, and unconditional *election* be a truth, that of a special design in the death of Christ, must necessarily follow. I do not suppose P. will admit the first; but I apprehend he will admit that if the first could be proved a scripture truth, the last would follow of course. I might then urge all those scriptures and arguments

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* Luke xxiii. 34. Isai. liii. 12.

which appear to me to prove the doctrine of election. But this would carry me beyond my present design. I only say, the following scriptures, amongst many others, appear to me conclusive upon that subject; and what cannot be answered without a manifest force being put upon them. "God the Father hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus—according as he hath *chosen* us in him before the foundation of the world that we *should be holy*. God hath from the beginning *chosen* you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth. All that the Father *giveth* to me shall come to me. Whom he did foreknow, he did *predestinate to be conformed* to the image of his Son; moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also *called;* whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. I have much people in this city. As many as were *ordained to eternal life* believed. *Elect*, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, *unto obedience*. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works; but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Except

the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha. At this present time also there is a *remnant* according to the *election of grace*. The *election hath obtained it*, and the rest were blinded. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, *it* is not *of* him that willeth, nor *of* him that runneth; but *of God* that sheweth mercy."*

The above passages must be allowed to speak only of *a part* of mankind. This part of mankind must be stiled the *chosen* of God, *given* of the Father, &c. either because of their actually being believers, *or* because it was foreseen that they would believe, or as we suppose, because God eternally purposed in himself that they should believe and be saved. It cannot be on account of the *first*, seeing they were chosen "before the foundation of the world," and given to Christ prior to their believing in him. It cannot be on account of the *second*, because then, what he had done for us must have been according to something good in us, and not according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began. It would also be contrary to all those scriptures recited above, which represent our being chosen and given of the Father as the *cause* of faith and holiness. If our *conformity to the image*

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* Eph. i. 3, 4. 2 Thes. ii. 13. John vi. 37. Rom. viii. 29, 30. Acts xviii. 10. xiii. 48. 1 Pet. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 9. John xv. 16. Matt. xi. 25, 26. Rom. ix. 15, 16, 29. xi. 5, 7.

of the Son of God, our *faith*, *holiness*, and *obedience* are the *effects* of election, they cannot be the ground or reason of it. If men are given to Christ prior to the consideration of their coming to him, then they cannot be said to be given on account of their so coming. If then it cannot be on account of either the *first* or the *second*, I conclude it must be on account of the *last*.

The death of Christ is assigned as a reason why none at the last day shall be able to lay any thing to the *charge* of God s *elect*.* But if it extends equally to those who are condemned as to those who are justified, how does it become a security against such a charge? Whatever difference there may be in point of security between those who at that day are justified, and those who are condemned, the death of Christ is not supposed to have had any influence towards it. The security of the elect should rather have been ascribed to what they themselves have done in embracing the Saviour, than to any thing done by him, seeing what he did was no security whatever. It was no more than a cipher in itself considered. The efficacy of the whole it seems rested not upon what Christ had done, but upon what they themselves had done in believing in him.

VII. The character of the redeemed in the *world above*, implies the sentiment for which we plead. Not only did the four living creatures, and the four

* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

and twenty elders (which seem to represent the church militant) adore the Lamb, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" but it is witnessed of those who are without fault before the throne of God, that "they were redeemed (or BOUGHT) *from among* men, being the first-fruits unto God, and the Lamb." But if all of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation were bought by the blood of Christ, there could be no possibility of any being bought *from amongst* them.

The above are some of the reasons which induce me to think there was a certain, absolute, and consequently limited design in the death of Christ, securing the salvation of all those, and only those, who are finally saved. The reader will now judge of the confident manner in which P. asks, "What end can it answer to take all these pains to vindicate a doctrine which God has never revealed?" (36.)

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§ II.

WHEREIN SOME NOTICE IS TAKEN OF THE ARGUMENTS OF P. FOR THE CONTRARY HYPOTHESIS.

THE limited extent of Christ's death is said to be "inconsistent with divine *goodness*, and with the *tender mercies of God over all his works*." (73.) To this it is replied, fallen angels are a part of God's

works as well as fallen men; but Christ did not die for them: if therefore his death is to be considered as the criterion of divine goodness, and if the exercise of punitive justice is inconsistent with that attribute, then suppose we were to admit that Christ died for all mankind, still the psalmist's assertion cannot be true, and the difficulty is never the nearer being removed.

That God loves all mankind I make no doubt, and all the works of his hands *as such* considered, fallen angels themselves not excepted; but the question is, whether he loves them *all alike;* and whether the exercise of punitive justice be inconsistent with universal goodness? It is going great lengths for a weak worm to take upon him to insist that divine goodness must be exercised in such a particular instance, or it can have no existence at all. I dare not say there is no love, no goodness in all the providences of God towards mankind, nor yet in his giving them the means of grace and the invitations of the gospel, though he does not do all for them which he could do, to incline them to embrace them, and has neither purposed nor provided for such an end. On the contrary, I believe these things in themselves considered, to be instances of divine goodness, whatever the issue of them may be through men's depravity.

But if Christ did not die for all mankind, it is said "his tender mercies cannot be exercised towards them, no not in the good things of this life, for these only increase their misery: nor in life itself——for

every moment of it must be a dreadful curse." (73.) But horrid as these consequences may appear, a denier of God's *fore-knowledge* would tell P. the same consequences followed upon his own scheme, and that in their full extent. He would say, "You pretend to maintain the tender mercies of God over all his works; and yet you suppose him perfectly to know before any of these works were brought into being, the part that every individual would act, and the consequent misery that would follow. He was sure that millions of the human race would so act, place them under what advantages he would, as that they would certainly involve themselves in such a condition, that *it were better for them never to have been born.** He knew precisely who would come to such an end, as much as he will at the day of judgment. Why then did he bring them into existence? Surely they had better never have been born; or if they must be born, why were they not cut off from the womb, seeing he was sure that every moment of time they existed would only increase their misery? Is this goodness? Are these his tender mercies?" . . . I tremble while I write! For my part I feel difficulties attend every thing I think about. I feel myself a poor worm of the dust, whose understanding is infinitely too contracted to fathom the ways and works of God. I wish to tremble and adore; and take comfort in this, that what I know not now I shall know hereafter.

* Mark xiv. 21.

But "it is no where *expressly said* that Christ died only for a part of mankind." (71.) It is expressly said that he gave himself that he might purify unto himself a *peculiar people*—that he laid down his life for the *sheep*—that he loved the *church*, and gave himself for it—that he died that he might gather together in one *the children of God* that were scattered abroad—and that those who are without fault before the throne of God, were brought *from among men*. But be it so, that we no where expressly read that Christ did not die to redeem all mankind; the scriptures do not so much deal in negatives as in positives. Their concern is not so much to inform mankind what is not done, as what is done. I know not that it is any where expressly said that all mankind are not to be baptized; yet I suppose P. well understands that part of our Lord's commission to be restrictive.

There was no necessity for the apostles to publish the divine purposes to mankind in their addresses to them. These were not designed as a rule of action either for the preachers, or the hearers. It was sufficient for them both, that Christ was ready to pardon and accept of any sinner whatever that should come unto him. It was equally sufficient on the other hand, if after people believed, they were taught those truths which relate to the purposes of grace on their behalf, with a view to cut off all glorying in themselves, and that they might learn to ascribe the whole *difference* between themselves and others to the mere sovereign grace of God. Hence it is, that the chief of those

scriptures which we conceive to hold forth a limitation of design in the death of Christ, or any other doctrine of *discriminating* grace, are such as were addressed to believers.

But the main stress of the argument seems to lie in the meaning of such general expressions as *all men—world—whole world*, &c. If these are discussed, I suppose I shall be allowed to have replied to the substance of what P. has advanced, and that is all I can think of attending to.

It is admitted, as was before observed, that there is in the death of Christ a sufficient ground for indefinite calls, and universal invitations—that God does invite mankind without distinction to return to him through the mediation of his Son, and promises pardon and acceptance to whomsoever shall so return. There have been, and now are many considerable writers, who are far from disowning the doctrine of particular redemption, or that the salvation of those who are saved is owing to an absolute and consequently limited design in the death of Christ; who yet apprehend that a way is opened for sinners without distinction being invited to return to God, with the promise of free pardon on their return. And they suppose the above general expressions are intended to convey to us this idea. For my part, though I think with them in respect to the thing itself; yet I question if these general expressions are so to be understood. The terms *ransom*, *propitiation*, &c. appear to me to express more than this, and what is true only of those who are finally saved. To die *for*

us appears to me to express the design or intention of the Redeemer. Christ's death effected a real *redemption, through which we are justified.* He *redeemed* us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us;* and thereby secured the *blessing* to come upon us in due time.* Such a meaning therefore of the general expressions above mentioned does not appear to me agreeable; much less can I accede to the sense put upon them by Philanthropos.

The rule of interpretation mentioned by P. (76.) I approve. His sense of the passages referred to, I apprehend to be "contradicted by other scriptures—contrary to the scope of the inspired writers—and what involves in it various absurdities."

The following *observations* are submitted to the judgment of the impartial reader.

I. It is the usual language of scripture, when speaking of the blessings of salvation extending to the *Gentiles*, to describe it in *indefinite terms.* "O, thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall *all flesh* come. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and *all flesh* shall see it together. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall *all flesh* come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And I will pour out my spirit upon *all flesh*, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, &c. Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the God of the

* Rom. iii. 24. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

whole earth shall he be called. *All the ends of the world* shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and *all the kindreds of the nations* shall worship before thee. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all men* unto me. *Every valley* shall be filled, and *every mountain* and hill shall be brought low; and *all flesh* shall see the salvation of God. *All nations* whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. *All kings* shall fall down before him; *all* nations shall serve him: men shall be blessed in him, *all nations* shall call him blessed."*

These passages, with many others, express blessings which cannot be understood universally, as P. himself must acknowledge. Now I ask, would not these furnish a contender for the universal and final salvation of all mankind with as good an argument as that which P. uses against us? Might he not say, "The subject in question can require no figures? Surely the great God could not intend to impose upon his poor ignorant creatures. He could receive no *honour* from such an imposition. It would be no glory to you, sir, to ensnare a fly or a gnat. We are infinitely more below Deity than a fly or a gnat is inferior to us. He cannot then be honoured by deceiving us. And we may say, with reverence, that his justice, and all his moral perfections require that he

* Psalm lxv. 2. Isai. xl. 5. lxvi. 23. Joel ii. 28. Isai. liv. 5. Psalm lxxii. 27. John xii. 32. Luke iii. 6. Psalm lxxxvi. 9. lxxii. 11, 17.

should be explicit in teaching ignorant men on subjects of such importance as this." (40.)*

II. The *time* in which the New Testament was written, render such a sense of the indefinite terms there used very possible, and very probable.—The Jews, it is well known, were at that time very tenacious of *exclusive privileges*. Their prejudices taught them to expect a Messiah whose blessings should be confined to their own peculiar nation. The generality of even those who believed were exceedingly jeal-

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* P. speaks of *reverence;* and I have no doubt but that in general he feels it: but surely in this place he must have forgot himself. Surely a greater degree of sobriety would have become a creature so ignorant and insignificant as he describes himself, than to determine what kind of language God shall use in conveying his mind to men. There is no doubt but God's word in all its parts is sufficiently explicit. Every thing that relates to the *warrant* and *rule* of a sinner's application for salvation especially, is plain and easy. The way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err. And if some truths, which do not affect either his right to apply to the Saviour, or his hope of success on application, should be expressed in figurative language, I hope such a mode of expression will not be found to reflect upon the moral character of God.

I wish especially, P. had written with more sobriety in what he says of God's "*deceiving* and *ensnaring* us." What deception is there in the case? Do we suppose it possible for a poor sinner, encouraged by the invitations of the gospel, to apply to Christ, and there meet with a repulse? no such thing. To what purpose then is it asked, "How can any man believe the promises of God, if he be not assured that God is in earnest, and means to fulfil them?" (49.)

ous, and found it hard work to relinquish their peculiar notions, and be reduced to a level with the Gentiles. It seems highly proper, therefore, that the Holy Ghost should in some sort cut off their vain pretensions; and this he did, not only by directing the apostles to the use of indefinite language, but by putting words into the mouth of Caiaphas, their own high-priest. He bore witness for God, though he meant no such thing, how that Jesus "should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one *the children of God that were scattered abroad.*"*

III. The *scope* and *connexion* of several of the passages produced, countenance such an interpretation.—

1 Tim. ii. 6. "He gave himself a ransom for *all*, &c." This is a passage on which considerable stress is laid. The whole passage reads as follows, "I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due

* John xi. 51, 52.

time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

I allow it to be the revealed will of God, that every man who hears, or has opportunity to hear the gospel, should return to him by Jesus Christ; and whosoever so returns shall surely be saved. But I apprehend, let us understand by the *will* of God in this place what we may, we can never make it applicable to all men universally. By the *truth* which God will have all men to come to the knowledge of, is plainly intended that of *the one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, which is here opposed to the notion of *many* gods, and *many* mediators among the heathens. But in no sense can it be said to be God's will that all men universally should come to the knowledge of the *latter branch* of this truth, unless it be his will that millions of the human race should believe in him of whom they have never heard.

I should think the latter part of verse 6, 7, determines the meaning. The phrase *to be testified in* DUE TIME, doubtless refers to the gospel being preached amongst *all nations*, though not to all the individuals of any one nation, *before the end of the world.* Hence it follows, whereunto I am ordained a preacher—a teacher of the GENTILES in faith and verity. "God does not now, as if the apostle had said, confine his church as heretofore, amongst the Jews. Your prayers, hopes, and endeavours, must now extend over all the world. God will set up his

kingdom in all the kingdoms of the earth. Seek the welfare and eternal salvation of men therefore without distinction of rank or nation. There is not a country under heaven but what is given to the Messiah for his inheritance, and he shall possess it *in due time*. In due time the gospel shall be testified throughout all the world; for the ushering in of which glorious tidings, I am appointed a *herald*, an apostle, a teacher of the GENTILES in faith and verity."*

I have seen nothing at present sufficient to convince me, but that this is the meaning of 1 John ii. 2. "*He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" John, the writer of the epistle, was a *Jew*, an apostle of the *circumcision* in connexion with Peter and James. (Gal. ii. 9.) The epistles of Peter and James were each directed to the *Jews;* (1 Pet. i. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 1. Jam. i. 1.) and Dr. *Whitby* acknowledges, concerning this epistle, that it "being written by an apostle of the circumcision, it is not doubted but it was writ-

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* *He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*— Whether the *ransom* of Christ extends farther than the *testimony* of the gospel, or not, is a question which I do not pretend to determine; be that however as it may, neither supposition will suit the scheme of P. If it does *not*, his point is given up. If it *does*, if it includes the whole heathen world, it is to be hoped they are somewhat the better for it, not only in this world but in that to come. But if so, either they must go to heaven without regeneration, or regeneration in those cases is not *by faith*.

teh to the *Jews*."* The same is intimated by several passages in the epistle itself. The *fathers* to whom he writes (ch. ii. 13, 14.) knew Christ *from the beginning*. In verse 18. of the same chapter, he appears plainly to refer to our Lord's prophecies concerning the awful end of the *Jewish* nation, and to the false prophets that should come into the world previous to that event. He insists much upon Christ's being *come in the flesh*, which was a truth more liable to be denied by the *Jews* than the Gentiles. Finally, the term itself, which is rendered *propitiation*, plainly alludes to the *Jewish mercy-seat*. Many things in it, 'tis true, will equally apply to Jews and Gentiles. Christ is the *advocate* of the one as well as the other; but that is no proof that the epistle is not directed to believing Jews, as the same may be said of many things in the epistle of James, which also is called a *catholick* or *general* epistle, though expressly addressed *to the twelve tribes, who were scattered abroad*.†

After all, I wish it to be considered whether the text refers to any other than *believers* of either Jews or Gentiles. In my opinion it does not; and if so, the argument from it in favour of the universal extent of Christ's death is totally invalidated. My rea-

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* Preface to his Annotations on First Epistle of John.

† Had not an argument been drawn from the *title* of this epistle in favour of its being written to both Jews and Gentiles, I should have taken no notice of it, as these *titles* I suppose were given to the epistles by uninspired writers.

sons for this opinion are as follow—The term *propitiation* is not put for what Christ is unto us considered only as laying down his life, and offering himself a sacrifice; but for what he is unto us *through faith*. He is "set forth to be a *propitiation*, *through faith in his blood*."* He cannot therefore, one should think, be a propitiation to any but *believers*. There would be no propriety in saying of Christ, he is set forth to be an expiatory sacrifice *through faith in his blood*, because he was a sacrifice for sin prior to the consideration of our believing in him. The text does not express what Christ *was*, as laying down his life, but what he "is" in consequence of it. Christ being our propitiation, certainly *supposes* his being a sacrifice for sin; but it also supposes something more: it includes the idea of that sacrifice becoming *the medium of the forgiveness of sin, and of communion with God*. It relates not to what has been called the impetration but the application of redemption. Christ is our propitiation in the same sense as he is *The Lord our righteousness*, which also is said to be *through faith;* but how he should be a propitiation *through faith* to those who have no faith, is difficult to conceive.

The truth seems to be this, Christ is that of which the Jewish mercy-seat (or propitiatory) was a type—the Jewish mercy-seat was the *medium of mercy*, and *communion with God* for all the worshippers of God of old†—Christ is that in reality which this was but

* Rom. iii. 25. † Exod xxv 22.

in figure, and is not like that confined to a single nation—He is the medium through which *all believers*, of *all ages*, and *nations* have access to God, and receive the *forgiveness of their sins*. All this perfectly agrees with the scope of the apostle, which was to encourage backslidden *believers* against despair.

Though it is here supposed the apostle personates believing *Jews*, and that "the whole world" means the Gentiles; yet, if the contrary were allowed, the argument would not be thereby affected. Suppose him by "our sins" to mean, *the sins of us who now believe, whether Jews or Gentiles*, still it amounts to the same thing; for then what follows is as if he had added, and not for ours only, but for the sins of all that ever came, or shall come unto God by him from the beginning to the end of time.

P. objects the want of other passages of scripture in which the terms "*whole world* signify the *elect*, or those that *believe*, or those that are saved, or any thing contradictory to the sense he has given." (81.) The terms *whole world* are certainly used in a limited sense by the apostle Paul, when he says of the christians at Rome, that their "faith was spoken of throughout the *whole world*."* Though Rome at that time was in a sort the metropolis of the known world, and those who professed christianity in that famous city were more conspicuous than those who professed it in other places; yet there were many

* Rom. i. 8.

countries not then discovered, in which the news of their faith could not possibly have arrived. Besides, it is evident from the drift of the apostle, that the faith of the Romans was spoken of in a way of *commendation;* but it is not supposeable that the whole world universally would so speak of it. By the "whole world" therefore can be meant no more than the *believing* part of it in those countries where christianity had began to make its way. Farther, Christ is called "the God of the *whole earth.*"* The whole earth must here mean *believers*, as it expresses not his universal government of the world, but his tender relation of a *husband*, which it was here foretold he should sustain towards the Gentile as well as the Jewish church. Again, The gospel of Christ preached *in the world* is compared to leaven hid in three measures of meal till the *whole* was leavened.† This doubtless implies that the gospel, before it has finished its operations, shall spread throughout the *whole world*, and leaven it. But this will never be true of all the individuals in the world, for none but true *believers* are leavened by it.

But P. thinks the phrase "whole world," in 1 John ii. 2. ought to be interpreted by a like phrase in ch. v. 19. and yet be himself cannot pretend that they are of a like meaning, nor does he understand them so. By the "whole world" in the one place he understands all the inhabitants that ever were or

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* Isai liv. 6. † Matt. xiii. 33.

should be in the world, excepting those from whom they are there distinguished: but in the other can only be meant the wicked of the world, who *at that time* existed upon the earth.

The most plausible argument advanced by P. is, in my opinion, from 2 Cor. v. 15, on which he observes that the phrase "they who live," is *distributive*, and must therefore include only a part of the "all" for whom Christ died. (78.) Whether the following remarks are sufficient to invalidate the argument of P. from this passage, the reader is left to judge.

1. The context speaks of the GENTILES being interested in Christ as well as the Jews. "Henceforth know we no man after the *flesh;* yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Verse 16, 17, compared with Gal. vi. 15.

2. It does not appear to be the design of the apostle to affirm that Christ died for all that were dead, but that all were dead for whom Christ died. P. wonders, and it seems has much ado to keep up his good opinion of my integrity, for what I said in a note on this subject before. (26.) That it is the main design of the apostle to speak of the *condition* of those for whom Christ died, I conclude, partly from his having been describing the condition of sinners as subject to the *terrors* of divine vengeance, verse 11. and partly from the phraseology of 14. The apostle's words are, "If one died for all, then were *they* all

dead;" which both proves that the condition of those for whom Christ died was the subject of the apostle's main discourse, and that the extent of the term *all* in the latter part of this verse is to be determined by the former, and not the former by the latter.

But "has the little word *all* lost its meaning?" No, certainly; nor does what is here advanced suppose that it has. The *main design* of a writer is not expressed in every word in a sentence, and yet every word may have its meaning. Though I suppose that the term here may refer to Jews and Gentiles; yet that does not necessarily imply that it was the apostle's *main design* here to speak of the extent of Christ's death.

3. Though our hypothesis supposes that all for whom Christ died shall finally live; yet it does not suppose that they all live *at present*. It is but a part of those for whom he died, viz. such as are called by his grace, who live not unto themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again.

There are some other passages produced by P, particularly Heb. ii. 9. and 2 Pet. ii. 1. but I am ready to think he himself does not place much dependence upon them. He is not unacquainted with the scope of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, nor of the word *man* not being in the text. Nor need he be told that the apostle Peter in the context of the other passage, appears to be speaking nothing about the purchase of the Saviour's blood—that the name there given to the purchaser is never applied to Christ—and that if it is applied to him in this in-

stance, it is common to speak of things not as they actually are, but as they are professed to be: thus apostates are said to be *twice dead*, as if they had been spiritually alive, though in fact that was never the case, but barely the matter of their profession. See also Matt. xiii. 12. Luke viii. 18.

§ III.

ON THE CONSISTENCY OF THE LIMITED EXTENT OF CHRIST'S DEATH, AS STATED ABOVE, WITH UNIVERSAL CALLS, INVITATIONS, &c.

HERE we come to the second question, and to what is the only part of the subject to which I am properly called upon to reply. If a limitation of design in the death of Christ is inconsistent with exhortations and invitations to mankind in general, it must be because it is inconsistent for God to exhort and invite men to any thing, with which he has not made gracious provision by the death of his Son to enable them to comply.

When I deny a gracious provision being necessary to render exhortations consistent, I would be understood to mean, 1. Something more than a provision of pardon in behalf of all those who shall believe in Christ. 2. More than the furnishing of men with motives and reasons for compliance; or ordering it so that these motives and reasons shall be urged upon them. If no more than this were meant by the term,

I should allow that such a provision is necessary. But by a gracious provision I mean that, be it what it may, which removes a moral inability to comply with the gospel, and which renders such a compliance possible without the invincible agency of the Holy Spirit.

What hath been said before may be here repeated, that the doctrine of a limitation of design in the death of Christ stands or falls with that of the divine *purposes*. If the latter can be maintained, and maintained to be consistent with the free-agency of man, and the entire use of means; then it will not be very difficult so to defend the former. I confess the subject is profound, and that I enter upon it with fear and trembling. It is a subject on which I dare not indulge a spirit of speculation. Perhaps the best way of studying it is upon our knees! I hope it will be my endeavour to keep close to what God hath revealed concerning it. There are doubtless many questions that might be started by a curious mind which it would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, to solve. Nor is this to be wondered at. The same difficulty attends us in the present state respecting almost all the works of God. No man could solve one half of the difficulties that might be started concerning God's goodness in creating the world, when he knew all that would follow. The same might be said of a thousand things in the scheme of divine providence. Suffice it for us at present, that we know our littleness—that when we come to see things as they are, we shall be fully convinced of all that has

been told us; and shall unite in the universal acclamation, HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL.

That there is a consistency between the divine decrees and the free-agency of men, I believe; but whether I can account for it is another thing. Whether it can be accounted for at all so as to enable us clearly to comprehend it, I cannot tell. Be that as it may, it does not distress me: I believe in both, because both appear to me to be plainly revealed. Of this I shall attempt to give evidence in what follows:——

I. The *time of man's life* is appointed of God.—"Is there not *an appointed time* for man upon earth? are not his days also like *the days of an hireling?* His *days are determined*, the *number of his months*, are with thee; thou hast *appointed his bounds that he cannot pass*. All the days of my *appointed time* will I wait till my change come."* And yet men are exhorted to use means to prolong their lives; and actually do use those means as if there was no appointment in the case. God determines to send afflictions to individuals and families; and he may have determined that those afflictions shall terminate in death: nevertheless it is God's revealed will that they should use means for their recovery as much as if there were no determination in the affair. Children were exhorted to honour their parents that their *days might be long* in the land which the Lord their God had

* Job vii. 1. xiv. 5. 14.

given them. He that desired life and loved *many days*, was exhorted to keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile.* If by neglect or excess any one come to what is called an untimely end, we are not to suppose either that God is disappointed, or the sinner exculpated.

II. Our *portion in this life* is represented as coming under the divine appointment.†——It is a *cup*, a *lot*, an *heritage*. David spake of his portion as laid out for him by *line*. The *lines* saith he, are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly *heritage*. The times before appointed are *determined*, and the bounds of our habitation are fixed. It is a satisfaction to a humble mind that his *times* and concerns *are in God's hand:* and that he has the *choosing of his inheritance*.‡ And yet in all the concerns of life we are exhorted to act with discretion, as much as if no divine providence existed.

The purposes of God extend to the *bitter* part of our portion as well as the sweet. Tribulations are things to which we are said to be *appointed*. Nor is it a mere *general* determination—Of all the ills that befel an afflicted *Job*, not one came unordained. Cutting and complicated as they were, he calmly ac-

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* Exod. xx. 12. Ps. xxxiv. 12.

† P. calls this in question; (47.) and seems to admit that if this could be proved, it would prove the consistency of the divine purposes concerning men's eternal state, with their obligations to use the means of salvation.

‡ Ps. xvi. 5, 6. Acts xvii. 26. Ps. xxxi. 15. xlvii. 4.

knowledged this, and it was matter of relief under his trouble—*He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him*—Nevertheless there are things which have a tendency to fill up this cup with either happiness or misery; and it is well known men are exhorted to pursue the one, and avoid the other, the same as if there was no divine purpose whatever in the affair.

God appointed to give *Pharaoh* and *Sihon* up to their own hearts lusts, which would certainly terminate in their destruction; and yet they ought each to have accepted of the messages of peace which God sent them by the hand of Moses. But here I am told, I have "obviated my own reasoning," by observing elsewhere that the 'predeterminations of God concerning those persons were founded on the foresight of their wicked conduct, of which their non-compliance with these messages of peace was no inconsiderable part.' (47.) By this it should seem then, that P. admits the reality of divine decrees, and that the final state of every one is thereby determined of God; only that it is upon the *foresight* of faith or unbelief. In that case he seems to admit of a consistency between the purposes of God to punish some of the human race, and their being universally invited to believe and be saved. And yet, if so, I see not the propriety of some of his objections against the doctrine of decrees. The thing against which he in some places reasons is not so much their unconditionality as the *certainty* of their issue. "All must

be sensible, says he, that divine decrees *must stand.*" (50.) Be it so, must they not *stand* as much upon his own hypothesis as ours?

As to the *conditionality* of divine decrees, it is allowed, that in whatever instances God has determined to *punish* any of the sons of men, either in this world or that to come, it is entirely upon the foresight of evil. It was so in all the punishments that befel Pharaoh and Sihon. But there was not only the exercise of punitive *justice* discovered in those instances, but as well a mixture of *sovereignty*. If the question is asked, why did God *punish* these men? the answer is, on account of their sin. But if it is asked, why did he punish them *rather than others, in themselves equally wicked?* the answer must be resolved into mere sovereignty. He that stopped a persecuting Saul in his vile career, could have turned the heart of Pharaoh; but he is a debtor to none, he hath said he *will have mercy on whom he will have mercy*. The apostle Paul considered the destruction of Pharaoh as not merely an instance of *justice*, but likewise of *sovereignty;* (Rom. ix. 18.) and concludes from his example, *therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;* which I should suppose can intend nothing less than leaving them to the hardness of their hearts.—The 19th verse, which immediately follows, and contains the objections of that day, are so nearly akin to the objections of Philanthropos, (50.) that I wonder he should not perceive it, and learn instruction by it.

III. Events which imply *the evil actions of men* come under the divine appointment.—The visitations with which *Job* was afflicted, were of *God's sending*. He himself knew this, and acknowledged it. And yet this did not hinder but that the Sabeans and Chaldeans acted as free agents in what they did; and that it was their duty to have done otherwise. Assyria was *God's rod* to Judah; and the staff in *their hands* was *his* indignation. And yet Assyria ought not so to have oppressed Judah. Pride, covetousness, and cruelty, were their motives, for all which they were called to account, and punished. Our Lord was delivered according to *the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*. His worst enemies did nothing to him but what *his hand and his counsel determined before to be done*. And yet this did not hinder but that with *wicked hands* they crucified and slew him—that the contrary of all this was their duty—and that the invitations and expostulations of our Lord with them were founded in propriety and sincerity. God did not determine to give Judas a heart to forbear betraying his master when tempted by the lure of gain; on the contrary, he determined to give him up to his own heart's lust. The Son of man in being betrayed, went as it was *determined:* and yet there was a wo due to, and denounced against the horrid perpetrator notwithstanding.*

Exclamations may abound, but facts are stubborn

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* Job i. 21. Isai. x. 5—14. Acts ii. 23. iv. 28. Luke xxii. 22.

things. It is likely we may be told, if this be the case, we need not be uneasy about it, for it is as God would have it. "If God has ordained it, why should we oppose it?" (50.) But such a mode of objecting, as observed before, though of ancient, is not of very honourable extraction. If it be not identically the same which was made to the apostolic doctrine, it is certainly very nearly akin to it. I can discern no difference except in words. "Thou wilt say then unto me, *why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?*" To which it was thought sufficient to reply, *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?*

After all, surely there is a wide difference between an efficient and a permissive determination in respect to the existence of moral evil. To assign the former to the divine being is to make him the author of sin, but not so the latter. That God doth permit evil is a fact that cannot be disputed; and if we admit the perfection of his moral character, it must be allowed to be consistent with his righteousness, whether we can fully conceive of it or not. But if it is consistent with the righteousness of God to permit evil, it cannot be otherwise to determine so to do, unless it be wrong to determine to do what is right.*

* Were it not for the candor that P. has discovered in other instances, and his solemn appeal to "the searcher of hearts that misrepresentation was not his aim," I should almost think he must take pleasure in representing my sentiments on divine decrees in as shocking a light as he is able. What I should express

IV. Our Lord declared concerning those who should *blaspheme against the Holy Ghost*, that their sin should not be forgiven, neither in this world nor

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in some such manner as this, 'God commands men in general to believe in Christ, though he knows they are so obstinately wicked that they cannot find in their heart so to do; and he has determined not to do all that he is able to remove their obstinacy'—he will express for me on this wise, "God commands all to believe in Christ; and yet knows they are not, or ever were, and determines they *never shall be able* to do it." (49) P. will allow, I suppose, that God has not determined to enable men, in the present state, perfectly to love him, with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength; and yet if this were put into a positive form—if it were said that God has determined that men in the present state *shall not love him* with all their hearts, but that *they shall* continue to break his law, it would wear a very different appearance.

That there is a conformity between God's revealed will and his decrees, I admit. (49) There is no contradiction in these things in themselves considered, however they may appear to short-sighted mortals. That there is, however, a real distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, is not very difficult to prove. The will of God is represented in scripture, 1. As that which *can never be frustrated* "*Who hath resisted his will. He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doth.* Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who *worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* He *doth according to his will* in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Of a truth, Lord, against thy holy child Jesus—both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, *for to do whatsoever thy hand, and thy counsel determined before to be done.*"‡ 2. As that

‡ Rom. ix. 19. Job xxiii. 13. Eph. i. 11. Isai. xlvi. 10. Dan. iv. 35. Acts iv. 27, 28.

that to come.*—And there is no doubt I think but that some of the Jews were guilty of this sin; if not before, yet after the pouring out of the Spirit in the

* Matt. xii. 31, 32.

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which *may be frustrated*, or disobeyed. "That servant that knew his Lord's *will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will*, shall be beaten with many stripes. He that *doth the will of God*, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."§ The former *belongeth unto God*, being the rule of his own conduct, and to us in *secret:* the latter belongeth to us, and to our children for ever, being the rule of our conduct, *that we may do all the words of his law*, and this is fully *revealed*.‖

It was God's will in some sense or other to permit Job, at the devil's request, to be deprived of his property by the Sabeans and Chaldeans; otherwise he would not have said to satan as he did, "all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand." And yet the conduct of these plunderers was certainly contrary to his revealed will, and to every rule of reason and equity. Nevertheless God was not under obligation to do all he could have done to restrain them. It was not therefore at all inconsistent with his righteous disapprobation, that he willed to permit their abominations.—If it was the will of God that Joseph should go down into Egypt God is said to have *sent* him. The very thing which his brethren *meant for evil, God meant for good.* They fulfilled his secret will in what they did, though without design; but 'tis certain they violated his revealed will in the most flagrant manner.

If the commission of evil were the *direct end*, or *ultimate object* of the secret will of God, that would certainly be in opposition to his revealed will; but this we do not suppose. If God wills not to hinder sin in any given instance, it is not out of any liking he has to sin, but for some other end. A master sees a servant idling away his time—he secretes himself, and suffers

§ Luke xii. 47. Mark iii. 35. ‖ Deut. xxix. 29.

day of pentecost. Their destruction then was inevitable. And yet the apostles were commissioned to preach the gospel to *every cretaure*, without distinction; and Christ's promise, "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," continued of universal force. The primitive ministers made no scruple to call men to repent and believe wherever they came. 'Tis true, they seem to have been forbidden to pray for the forgiveness of the *sin itself*,‡ for that would have been praying in direct contradiction to God's revealed will; but as they

‡ 1 John v. 16.

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the idler to go on without disturbance—At length he appears, and accosts him in the language of rebuke——The servant, at a loss for a better answer replies, 'How is this? I find you have been looking on for hours It was your secret will therefore to let me alone, and suffer me to idle away your time; and yet I am reproved for disobeying your *will!* It seems you have *two* wills, and these opposite to each other. "How can I obey your commands unless I knew you would have me to obey them?" Idleness, it seems, was agreeable to you, or you would not have stood by so long, and suffered me to go on in it undisturbed. *Why do you yet find fault? who hath resisted your will?*

Would any one admit of such a reply? and yet for ought I see, it is as good as that for which my opponent pleads. In this case it is easy to see, that the master does not will to permit the servant's idleness for *idleness' sake*, but for another end; nor does the servant do wrong as influenced by his master's will, but by his own: and therefore his objections are altogether unreasonable and wicked. *These things hast thou done*, said God to such objectors, *and I kept silence? and thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee!*

knew not the hearts of men, nor who had, and who had not committed that sin, they were never forbidden, that I know of, to pray for men's souls without distinction. They certainly did so pray, and addressed their auditors as if no such sin had existed in the world.* P. will allow that the exhortations and invitations of the gospel were addressed to men indefinitely; and if so, I should think they must have been addressed to some men whom at the same time it was not the *intention* of Christ to save.

V. God has not determined to give men sufficient grace in the present state to love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbour as themselves; or in other words to keep his law perfectly.—He has not made provision for it by the death of his Son. I suppose this may be taken for granted. If then a gracious provision is to be made the ground and rule of obligation, it must follow that all commands and exhortations to perfect holiness in the present state, are utterly unreasonable. What meaning can there be upon this supposition in such scriptures as the following? "O that there were such an *heart* in them, that they would love me, and fear me, and keep *all* my commandments, *always!* And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in *all* his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul?* Be ye therefore

* Acts xxvi. 29. Col. i. 28.

perfect, as your Father *who is in heaven is perfect.*"* If God's law continues to be an "invariable rule of human conduct, and infallible test of right and wrong," as P. says it does, then either there is a gracious provision made for perfection in the present state, or God requires and exhorts men to that for which no such provision is made.

VI. If I am not misinformed, P. allows of the *certain perseverance of all true believers*. He allows, I suppose, that God has determined their perseverance, and has made gracious and effectual provision for it. He will not say so of hypocrites. God has not determined they shall *continue in his word*, hold out to the end, and finish their course with joy. Nevertheless the scriptures address all professors alike, with cautions and warnings, promises and threatenings, as if there were no decree, nor any certainty in the matter, about one or the other. "Holy brethren, and partakers of the heavenly calling," on the one hand, are exhorted to "fear lest a promise being left them of entering into rest, any of them should seem to come short of it;" and are warned from the example of the unbelieving Israelites, to "labour to enter into rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." The disciples of Christ were charged, upon pain of eternal damnation, "if their right-hand or right-eye caused them to offend, to cut it off, or pluck it out." Whatever some may think of it, there

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* Deut v. 29. x. 12. Matt. v. 48.

would be no contradiction in saying to the best christian in the world, "If you deny Christ, he will deny you!"*——Such as proved to be mere professors, on the other hand, were addressed by Christ in this manner; "If ye *continue in my word*, then shall ye be my disciples indeed;"† and when any such turned back, and walked no more with him, though no such provision was made for their perseverance as is made for true believers, yet their falling away was always considered as their *sin*. Judas, and Demas, and many others, fell under the divine displeasure for their apostacy.

I confess these things may look like contradictions. They are doubtless profound subjects; and perhaps, as some have expressed it, we shall never be fully able in the present state to explain the *link* that unites the appointments of God with the free actions of men: but such a link there is; the fact is revealed abundantly in scripture, and it does not distress me if in this matter I have all my life to walk by faith and not by sight.

From the above cases I conclude, that however difficult it may appear to us, it is proper for God to exhort and invite men to duties with which he has not determined to give them a moral ability, or an heart to comply; and for which compliance he hath made no effectual provision by the death of his Son;

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* Heb. iii. 1. iv. 1, 11. Matt. xviii. 8, 9. x. 33. 2 Tim. ii. 12.

† John viii. 31.

and if it is so in these cases, I farther conclude it may be so in the case in hand.

Two remarks shall conclude this part of the subject.—

1. Whether P. will allow of some of the foregoing grounds as proper data, may be doubted. I could have been glad to have reasoned with him wholly upon his own principles; but where that cannot be, it is right and just to make the word of God our ground. If he can overthrow the doctrine supposed to be maintained in these scriptures, then it is allowed he will, in so doing, overthrow that which is built upon them, but not otherwise. In the two last arguments, however, I have the happiness to reason from principles which I suppose P. will allow.

2. Whether the foregoing reasoning will convince P. and those of his principles, or not, it may have some weight with considerate Calvinists. They must *either* give up the doctrine of predetermination, *or* on this account deny that men are obliged to act differently from what they do; that *Pharaoh* and *Sihon*, for instance, were obliged to comply with the messages of peace which were sent them; *or else*, if they will maintain both these, they must allow them to be consistent with each other; and if divine decrees and free agency are consistent in some instances, it becomes them to give some solid reason why they should not be so in others.

§ IV.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

I AM not insensible that the cause I have been pleading is such as may grate with the feelings of some of my readers. It may seem as if I were disputing with PHILANTHROPY itself. To such readers I would recommend a few additional considerations.

1. The same objection would lie against me, if I had been opposing the notion of universal *salvation;* and yet it would not follow from thence that I must be in the wrong. The feelings of *guilty* creatures, in matters wherein they themselves are so deeply interested, are but poor criterions of truth and error.

2. There is no difference between us respecting the *number* or *character* of those that shall be finally saved. We agree that whoever returns to God by Jesus Christ shall certainly be saved—that in every nation, they that fear God and work righteousness, are accepted. What difference there is respects the *efficacy* of Christ's death, and the *causes* of salvation.

3. Even in point of *provision*, I see not wherein the scheme of P. has the advantage of that which he opposes. The provision made by the death of Christ is of two kinds.—(1.) A provision of pardon and acceptance for all believers. (2.) A provision of grace to enable a sinner to believe. The first affords a *motive* for returning to God in Christ's name; the

last excites to a *compliance* with that motive. Now in which of these has the scheme of P. any advantage of that which he opposes? Not in the *first;* we suppose the provisions of Christ's death altogether sufficient for the fulfilment of his promises, be they as extensive as they may—that full and free pardon is provided for all that believe in him—and that if all the inhabitants of the globe could be persuaded to return to God in Christ's name, they would undoubtedly be accepted of him. Does the scheme of P. propose any more? no, it pretends to no such thing as a provision for *unbelievers* being forgiven and accepted. Thus far at least therefore, we stand upon equal ground.

But has not P. the advantage in the *last* particular? does not his scheme boast of an universal provision of *grace*, sufficient to enable every man to comply with the gospel? Yes, it does, but what it amounts to is difficult to say. Does it effectually produce in mankind in general any thing of a right spirit, any thing of a true desire to come to Christ for the salvation of their souls? no such thing that I know of is pretended. At most it only amounts to this, that God is ready to help them out of their condition, *if they will but ask him;* and to give them every *assistance* in the good work, if they will but be in earnest and set about it. Well, if this is the whole of which P. can boast, I see nothing superior in this neither, to the sentiment he opposes. We consider the least degree of a right spirit as plentifully encouraged in the word of God. If a person do but truly *desire* to come to

Christ, or *desire the influence of the Holy Spirit to that end*, we doubt not but grace is provided for his assistance. God will surely *give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*.* Where then is the superiority of his system? It makes no effectual provision for begetting a right diposition in those who are so utterly destitute of it that they will not seek after it. It only encourages the well disposed; and as to these, if their well-disposedness is real, there is no want of encouragement for them in the system he opposes.

4. Whether the scheme of P. hath any advantage of that which he opposes, in one respect, or not, it certainly hath a disadvantage in another. By it the redemption and salvation of the whole human race is left to uncertainty; to such uncertainty as to depend upon the fickle, capricious, and perverse will of man. It supposes no effectual provision made for Christ to see *of the travel of his soul*, in the salvation of sinners. P. has a very great objection to a sinner's coming to Christ with a *peradventure;* (33.) but it seems he has no objection to his Lord and Saviour coming into the world, and laying down his life with no better security. Notwithstanding any provision made by his scheme, the head of the church might have been without a single member, the king of Zion without a subject, and the shepherd of Israel without any to constitute a flock. Satan might have triumphed for ever, and the many mansions in glory

* Luke xi. 13.

have remained eternally unoccupied by the children of men!*

5. Do we maintain that Christ in his death *designed* the salvation of those, and only those who are finally saved? the same follows from our opponent's own principles. They will admit that Christ had a certain fore-knowledge of all those who would, and who would not believe in him: but did ever an intelligent being design that which he knew would never come to pass.

6. The Scheme of P. though it professedly maintains that Christ died to atone for the sins of all mankind; yet in reality it amounts to no such thing. The sin of mankind may be distinguished into two kinds—that which is committed simply against God as a law-giver, antecedent to all considerations of the

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* P. observes on Heb. ii. 9. that "it is undoubtedly a greater instance of the *grace* of God that Jesus Christ should die for *all*, than only for a *part* of mankind;" and this he thinks "an argument of no little force in favour of his sense of the passage." (80.) It is true if Christ had made *effectual* provision for the salvation of all, it would have been a greater display of grace than making such a provision for only a part; but God has other perfections to display as well as his grace; and the reader will perceive by what has been said, that to make provision for all in the sense in which P. contends for it, is so far from magnifying the grace of God that it enervates, if not annihilates it. Where is the grace of taking mankind from a condition in which they would have been for ever *blameless*, and putting them into a situation in which at best their happiness was uncertain, their guilt certain, and their everlasting ruin very probable.

gift of Christ, and the grace of the gospel; and that which is committed more immediately against the gospel, despising the riches of God's goodness, and rejecting his way of salvation. Now does P. maintain that Christ made atonement for both these? I believe not; on the contrary, his scheme supposes that he atoned for neither. Not for the *first*, for he abundantly insists that there could be nothing of the nature of *blame-worthiness* in this, and consequently nothing to require an atonement. Not for the *last*, for if so; atonement must be made for *impenitency* and *unbelief*, and in that case surely these evils would not prove the ruin of the subject.

7. If the doctrine of the *total* depravity of human nature be admitted, (and it is so professedly) the scheme of P. would be utterly inadequate for the salvation of one soul. Supposing Christ to have died for all the world in his sense of the phrase, yet if all the world are so averse to Christ that they will not come unto him that they may have life, still they are never the nearer. It is to no purpose to say, there is grace provided for them if they will but ask it; for the question returns, will a mind utterly averse to coming to Christ for life sincerely desire grace to come to him? Nor is it of any use to suggest that the gospel has a tendency to beget such a desire; for be it so, it is supposed there is no *certainty* of its producing such an effect. It's success depends entirely upon the will of man in being pliable enough to be persuaded by it; but if man is totally depraved, there can be no such pliability in him. Unless the gospel could

exhibit a condition that should fall in with men's evil propensities, the aversion of their hearts would for ever forbid their compliance. Such a scheme, therefore, instead of being more extensive than ours, is of no real extent at all. Those good men who profess it, are not saved according to it; and this in their near addresses to God they as good as acknowledge. Whatever they say at other times, they dare not then ascribe to themselves the glory of being amongst the number of believers, rather than others.

If the supposed universal extent of Christ's death had a universal efficacy, it would be worth the while of A LOVER OF ALL MANKIND to contend for it; but if it proposes finally to save not *one soul more* than the scheme which it opposes—if it has no real advantage in point of *provision*, in one respect, and a manifest disadvantage in another—if it enervates the doctrine of the *atonement;* confessedly leaves the salvation of those who are saved to an *uncertainty*, and by implication renders it *impossible;* then to what does it all amount? If P. holds that Christ died for all, it is neither so as to *redeem* all, nor so much as to procure them the *offer* of redemption, since millions and millions for whom Christ suffered, upon his principles, have died notwithstanding in heathen darkness.*

* It seems to me a poor, and an inconsistent answer which is commonly given by our opponents upon this subject. They affirm that Christ died with a view to the salvation of the whole human race, *how wicked soever they have been;* and yet they sup-

P. thinks *success* to be a proof of the goodness of a doctrine. (4, 5.) I think it is a matter that deserves considerable attention; but cannot consider it as decisive: especially as certain questions might be

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pose that God *for the sin of some* nations with-holds the gospel from them. The giving of Christ to die for us is surely a *greater* thing than sending the gospel to us. One should think, therefore, if, notwithstanding men's wickedness, God could find in his heart to do the greater, he would not by the self-same wickedness be provoked to with-hold the lesser—Besides, on some occasions our opponents speak of the gospel as a system *adapted to the condition of sinners*, yea, to the *chief of sinners*; and if so, why not to those nations who are the chief of sinners? P. observes very justly, however inconsistently with some other things which he elsewhere advances, that the gospel takes men's fallen, polluted, and depraved state for granted, and is properly adapted to remove it: (23.) how is it then that that which renders them proper objects of gospel invitations, should be the very reason assigned for those invitations being with-held?

Whether there may not be a mixture of punitive justice in God's with-holding the gospel from some nations, I shall not dispute. At the same time, supposing that to be the case, it may be safely affirmed that the same punishment might with equal justice have been inflicted upon other nations who have all along enjoyed it; and that it is not owing to their having been better than others that they have been so favoured. One might ask of Jerusalem and Corinth, Chorazin and Bethsaida, were they less infamous than other cities? rather were they not the reverse? And may we not all who enjoy the gospel, when we compare ourselves with even heathen nations, adopt the language of the apostle, *Are we better than they? no, in no wise!*

If it be said, the providence of God is a great deep; snd we cannot from thence draw any conclusions respecting his designs—I answer by granting that indeed the providence of God

asked concerning it which it would be difficult to answer; as what is real success? and what was it in the ministry of a preacher which was blessed to that end? If, however, that is to be a criterion of principles,

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is a great deep; and if our opponents will never acknowledge a a secret and revealed will in God in any thing else, one should think they must here; seeing Christ's revealed will is, *Go, preach the gospel to every creature*, without distinction; and yet by their own confession, it is his secret purpose to withhold it from some, even whole nations.—As to drawing conclusions from hence concerning God's designs, I should think it no arrogance so to do provided we do not pretend to judge from thence concerning events which are future. We are warranted to consider God's providences as so many expressions of what have been his designs. *He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* It is true we cannot thence learn his *revealed will*, nor what is the path of duty, nor are we to go by that in our preaching, but by Christ's commission. It were well if christian ministers could be excited and encouraged to enter into the most heathen and dark corners of the earth to execute their commission. They ought not to stand to enquire what are God's designs concerning them; their work is to go and *do as they are commanded.* But though the providence of God is not that from whence we are to learn his revealed will, yet when we see events turn up; we may conclude, that for some ends, known to himself, these were amongst the *all things* which he *worketh after the counsel of his own will.*

Far be it from me to pretend to fathom the great deep of divine providence! But when I read in my bible that *as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;* and that the apostle Paul was encouraged to continue his ministry in one of the most infamous cities in the world, by this testimony, *I have much people in this city*, I cannot but think such passages throw a light upon those darker dispensations.

then we might expect, if the scheme of P. be true, that in proportion as the doctrines maintained by Calvin, and the first reformers, began to be laid aside, and those of Arminius introduced in their stead, a proportionable blessing should have attended them. Surely he cannot complain that the universal extent of Christ's death, with various other kindred sentiments, are not generally embraced. The number of advocates for these sentiments hath certainly been long increasing. If, therefore, these are gospel truths, the christian world in general may be congratulated for having embibed them; and one should think a glorious harvest might be expected as the effect.—But I suppose, were we to be set down by fact, as it has occurred in our own country, both in and out of the establishment, it would be far from confirming this representation. I question if P. himself will affirm, that a greater blessing has attended the ministry *in the church of England* since little else but these sentiments have sounded from its pulpits, than used to attend, and still attends the labours of those whom he is pleased to style "INCONSISTENT CALVINISTS." As to *protestant dissenters;* if such of them as maintain the universal extent of Christ's death, have been more blessed to the conversions of sinners than others, and if their congregations, upon the whole, have more of the life and power of godliness amongst them than others, it is happy for them; but if so it is, I acknowledge it is news to me. I never knew nor heard of any thing sufficient to warrant a supposition of that nature.

P. thinks my "view of things, after all, opens a wide door to licentiousness; (60.) but that if we were to admit what he accounts opposite sentiments, it would be the most likely way to put a stop to *real* and *practical* Antinomianism." (51.) I reply as before, surely he cannot complain that the universal extent of Christ's death, with other kindred sentiments, are not generally embraced; and will he pretend to say, that real and practical Antinomianism has been thereby rooted up? Since the body of the *church of England* have embraced those principles, have they been better friends to the law of God than before? and has a holy life and conversation been gradually encreasing amongst them as the old Calvinistic doctrines have fallen into disrepute?—Farther, do the body of those *protestant dissenters* who reject what are commonly called the Calvinistic doctrines, discover more regard to holiness of life than the body of those who embrace them? God forbid that we should any of us boast; by the grace of God we are what we are; and we have all defects enough to cover our faces with shame and confusion! But without invidious reflections, without impeaching the character of any man, or body of men, I am inclined to think if such a comparison were made, it would fail of proving the point which P. proposes. It is a well-known fact, that many who deny the law of God to be a rule of life, do at the same time maintain the universal extent of Christ's death.

P. seems to have written with the benevolent design of bringing me and others over to his senti-

ments; and I thank him for his friendly intention. Could I see evidence on his side, I hope I should embrace his invitation. But it is a presumptive argument with me that his views of things must be some how or other very distant from the truth, or they could not abound with such manifest inconsistencies. A scheme that requires us to maintain that we are saved wholly by *grace*, and yet so far as we *differ from others*, it is not the Spirit of God, but we ourselves that cause the difference—that to be born *in* sin is the same thing as to be born *blameless*, or in other words, *free from it*—that if vice is so predominant, that there is no virtue to oppose it, or not virtue sufficient to overcome it, then it ceases to be vice any longer—that God is *obliged* to give us *grace;* or, in other words, we may *demand* that of him to which we can lay no *claim*, or else insist upon it that we are not accountable beings—that God so loved mankind as to give his Son to die, not however, to save them from *sin;* but to deliver them from a blameless condition, put them into a capacity of being blame-worthy, and thus expose them to the danger of everlasting destruction—A scheme, I say, that requires us to maintain such inconsistencies as these, must be, some how or other, fundamentally wrong. What others may think I cannot tell, but for my part, I must with-hold my assent till more substantial and consistent evidence is produced.

If I have not taken notice of every particular argument and text of scripture advanced by P. I hope

I shall be allowed to have selected such as were of the greatest force, and by which the main pillars of his system are supported.

If I have in any instance mistaken his meaning, I hope he will excuse it. I can say I have taken pains to understand him. But whether I have always hit upon his meaning or not, and whether the consequences which I have pointed out as arising from his sentiments be just or not; I can unite with him in appealing to "the searcher of hearts, that misrepresentation has in no one instance been my aim."

As I did not engage in controversy from any love I had to the thing itself, so I have no mind to continue it any farther than some good end may be answered by it. Whether what I have written already tends to that end, it becomes not me to decide; but supposing it does, there is a point in all controversies, beyond which they are unprofitable and tedious. When we have stated the body of an argument, and attempted an answer to the main objections, the most profitable part of the work is done. Whatever is attempted afterwards must either consist of little personalities, with which the reader has no concern; or at best it will respect the minutiæ of things, in which case it seldom has a tendency to edification. To this I may add, though I see no reason at present to repent of having engaged in this controversy, and were it to do again should probably do the same; yet it never was my intention to engage in a controversy for life. Every person employed in the ministry of

the gospel has other things upon his hands of equal importance. If therefore any or all of my opponents should think proper to write again, the press is open: but unless something very extraordinary should appear, they must not conclude that I esteem their performances unanswerable though, I should read them without making any farther reply. The last word is no object with me; the main arguments on all sides of the controversy I suppose are before the public, let them judge of their weight and importance.

A reflection or two shall conclude the whole. However firmly any of the parties engaged in this controversy may be persuaded of the goodness of his cause, let us all beware of *idolizing* a sentiment. This is a temptation to which controversialists are particularly liable. There is a lovely *proportion* in divine truth: if one part of it is insisted on to the neglect of another, the beauty of the whole is defaced; and the ill effects of such a partial distribution will be visible in the spirit, if not in the conduct of those who admire it.

Farther, Whatever difficulties there may be in finding out truth, and whatever mistakes may attend any of us in this controversy, (as it is very probable we are each mistaken in some things;) yet let us ever remember, *truth itself is of the greatest importance.* It is very common for persons when they find a subject much disputed, especially if it is by those whom they account good men, immediately to conclude that it must be a subject of but little consequence, a mere matter of speculation. Religious controversies upon

such persons have a very ill effect: for finding a difficulty attending the coming at truth, and at the same time a disposition to neglect it, and pursue other things; they readily avail themselves of what appears to them a plausible excuse, lay aside the enquiry, and sit down and indulge a spirit of scepticism. True it is that such variety of opinions ought to make us very diffident of ourselves, and teach us to exercise a christian forbearance towards those who differ from us. It should teach us to know and feel what an inspired apostle acknowledged, that *here we see but in part*, and are at best but in a state of *childhood*. But if all disputed subjects are to be reckoned matters of mere speculation, we shall have nothing left in religion of any real use. Nor shall we stop here: if the same method of judging of the importance of things were adopted respecting the various opinions in useful science, the world would presently be in a state of stagnation. What a variety of opinions are there, for instance, concerning the best modes of *agriculture;* but if any person were to imagine from hence that agriculture itself must be a matter of no importance, and that all those articles therein which have come under dispute must be matters of mere idle speculation, what a great mistake would he be under. And if a great number were to imbibe the same spirit, and seeing there were so many opinions, resolve to pay no attention to any of them, and to live in the total neglect of all business, how absurd must such a conduct appear, and how pernicious must be the consequences! But a neglect

of all divine truth on account of the variety of opinions concerning it, is full as absurd, and infinitely more pernicious. As much as the concerns of our bodies are exceeded by those of our souls, or time by eternity; so much is the most useful human science exceeded in importance by those truths which are sacred and divine.

Finally, Let us all take heed that our attachments to divine truth itself be on account of its being *divine*. We are ever in extremes; and whilst one in a time of controversy, throws off all regard to religious sentiment in the gross, reckoning the whole a matter of speculation; another becomes excessively affected to his own opinions, whether right or wrong, without bringing them to the great criterion, the word of God. Happy will it be for us all if truth be the sole object of our enquiries; and if our attachment to divine truth itself be not on account of its being what we have once engaged to defend, but what God hath revealed. This only will endure reflection in a dying hour; and be approved when the time of disputing shall have an end with men.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

[Selected rom Smith's Lectures on the Nature and End of the Sacred Office.]

AN ADDRESS

TO

CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

"HE who intends to dedicate himself to the sa-
"cred office, ought early to devote himself to the
"strictest piety and virtue, that he may not be viti-
"ated by any ill habit, which it may not afterwards
"be easy for him to lay aside. He ought, above all
"things, to possess himself with a high sense of the
"christian religion, of its truth and excellency, of
"the value of souls, of the dignity of the pastoral care,
"of the honour of God, of the sacredness of holy
"functions, and of the great trust that is committed
"to those who are set apart from the world, and de-
"dicated to God and to his church. He who looks
"this way, must mortify himself to the appetites of
"pleasure, and wealth, and honour, and power. He
"must consider, that the relation in which he intends
"to officiate, calls every one who enters upon it to
"the greatest holiness and virtue; to a purity and
"innocency of manners, to a meekness and gentle-
"ness, to a humility and self-denial, to a contempt
"of the world, and a heavenly-mindedness, to a pa-
"tient resignation to the will of God, and a readi-

"ness to bear the cross, and follow his Master, "through good report and bad report, in hopes of "that everlasting reward which awaits him in ano- "ther world."* And when you, my young brethren, are about to consecrate yourselves to this important work, I hope you have examined before God, whether you have these dispositions; or, in other words; whether he hath called you to his service. I hope you can say in truth, that you "trust you are inwardly "moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this "office, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, "and the edifying of his people."† You will not, I trust, give God cause to complain of you, as he did of some of the false prophets of old, *I have not sent them, and yet they run.* This would be a crime of such enormity as you would not choose, I am persuaded, to be guilty of. For, "if a man pretend a commission from "a prince, or indeed from any person, and, in conse- "quence of it, acts in his name, the law will punish "him; and shall the great God of heaven and earth "be thus vouched, and his having moved them be "pretended by those whom he has neither called nor "sent? Or, shall he not reckon with those who dare "run without his mission, pretending that they have "it, when they never perhaps examined into its im- "portance, nor startled at the thoughts of becoming "sacriligious profaners of the name of God, and of "his Holy Spirit?"‡

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* Burnet's Pastoral Care. † Eng. Liturgy.

‡ Past. Care.

But of you, my young brethren, I hope better things. Human motives, I hope, are not those which influence you in your choice. The glory of God, and the salvation of souls, I trust, are the great end and aim you have in view. Gladly, then, will I address each of you, as Laban did Eliezer, *Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without?* It is of such labourers that the Lord hath need in his vineyard, and, on the prospect of having such for our fellow-labourers, we exceedingly rejoice.

But, on the other hand, if you have not examined yourselves, and found that you have a single eye to the glory of God, enter not the sacred place in which his honour dwells. Keep back, lest he ask you, *What have you to do to declare my statutes, or to take my covenant into your mouth?* If it is from selfish and worldly motives that you thrust yourselves into the sacred office, you are not the servants of Christ, but the slaves of your own corrupt passions, the slaves of the very worst ambition. All your concern is to get a tolerable maintenance, a comfortable subsistence in the world. Like the *unjust steward*, you are perhaps unwilling to dig, and to beg you are ashamed; therefore you turn your thoughts to this, as a very convenient employment. So it was in the degenerate times of the church of old. Men would *crouch for a piece of silver, and say, Put me, I pray thee, in the priest's office, that I may eat a piece of bread.* Hence the grievous complaint, that *the priests taught for hire, and the prophets divined for money.*

It is true, God hath ordained, that *they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel*, and have a sufficient maintenance provided for them; and the injustice of with-holding this from them, may be one of the most crying sins of the times.* But although this be their right, it should not be their motive.† When it is, it soon leads to avarice, and to an inordinate love of the world; the most sordid passion to which human nature ever stoops. In scripture, we find pious and regenerate persons falling into many sins, but, as it has been often observed, none of them into this. This is a spot never to be found in God's children; and proves more fatal than leprosy or plague, to those infected with its poison. The sin which carried Judas to his own place, was avarice. The sin which made Demas forsake the church, was avarice. The sin most directly opposite to that largeness of soul and generosity of sentiment, which the gospel inspires, is avarice. What a contradiction, then, must it be in a minister of the gospel? What a debasement of his character to yield to it? It is as if a king should descend from his throne to sit on the dunghill. Besides, this is a sin which is seldom found alone. Whoever is capable of it, is capable of

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* Mal. iii. 8—10.

† The late Dr. Johnson, when in indigent circumstances, was offered a rectory, if he would enter into orders. But this great and good man, sensible, as it is supposed, of the asperity of his temper, declined it; saying, "I have not the requisites for the "office, and I cannot in my conscience shear the flock, when I "am unable to feed."

any evil.* It renders a minister, especially, indifferent to the salvation or damnation of the souls of whom he has the charge. He is occupied only about the sordid and temporal profits to be derived from his office. Instead of using that evangelical earnestness, which almost borders on compulsion, to make people leave their farms, and their oxen, and accept of the gospel invitation, he forgets that he was sent out on this errand, and minds his farm, and his oxen himself, as much as they do. And if THE KING resented so highly, that the persons who were bidden, made light of his invitation, with how much greater severity will he treat that servant, who, neglecting his business, and betraying his trust, joins in their madness, and remains along with them! If they are treated as ingrates, he must be treated as a rebel. He goes forth to war against the world; and with the world he joins in league against his Master.

When a minister coldly commends the things that are heavenly, and warmly pursues the things that are earthly, who can believe him to be in earnest? Who will not rather consider him as a mere player,

> Who acts upon the stage an hour or two
> In an unreal character; and then
> Throws off the mask, and re-assumes his own?

How can this man's labours in the ministry be otherwise than lost? But his having lost his labour, and

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* Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra fames!

his having passed his life without ever gaining one soul to Christ, is not what affects him. This, without any complaint, he can bear with perfect patience. But what he laments is, that his function brought him no more of that filthy lucre, for which he served. Hence the source of all his grief; here the balance in which all his losses are weighed.

What then shall we say to these things? If Jesus drove the traffickers out of the temple, how will he permit such a wretch as this to enter into it? He may permit it (for he acts sometimes in the way of judgment as well as mercy,) but permit it with impunity he will not. He is a jealous God, and will never suffer any one to enter his temple, in order to bow down to an idol. This, in any man, would be the most heinous profanity; but, in a minister, the most horrid impiety. It would be a bold defiance to the Deity, and as it were, an open challenge to grasp his thunder. Why should you then, my young friends, allow yourselves to be thus impelled to your destruction by worldly motives? *What shall you be profited, if you gain the whole world* (of which, by the way, you can gain but very little,) *and lose your own souls?* Lose your own souls! Yes, most infallibly. And what is there in the world, that should tempt you to run this dreadful hazard? "The *world*, believe it, the *world* "has *nothing* solid, *nothing* durable. It is only a "*fashion*, and a fashion, too, that *passeth away*. Yes, "sirs, the tenderest *friendships* end. *Honours* are "specious titles, which time effaces. *Pleasures* are "amusements, which leaves only a lasting and pain-

" ful repentance. *Riches* are torn from us by the vio-
" lence of men, or elude us by their own instability.
" *Grandeurs* moulder away of themselves. *Glory* and
" renown at length lose themselves in the abysses of
" an eternal oblivion. So rolls the torrent of this
" world, whatever pains are taken to stop it. Every
" thing is carried away by a rapid train of passing
" moments; and by continual revolutions we arrive,
" frequently without thinking of it, at that fatal point,
" where time finishes, and eternity begins! Happy
" then the christian soul, who, obeying the precept of
" Jesus Christ, loves not the world, nor any thing
" that the world contains."*

But possibly, my young brethren, you may not look forward to this office from gainful motives, and yet your views may be still wrong. You may perhaps consider the temple of God as a place of repose, where you may loll your life away in ease and indolence.† Ah! my young brethren, how grossly are you mistaken! How little do you know of the many cares, fatigues, and perplexities, which attend the sacred

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* Archbishop Flechier.

† Erasmus laments, that in his time (and I fear it is so in ours) many young preachers greatly mistook the nature of their calling in this and other respects. " Verum ad conciones sacras ad-
" mittuntur, interdum etiam assiliunt adolescentes, leves, indoc-
" ti, quasi nihil sit facilius quam apud populum exponere divinam
" scripturam, et abunde sufficiat perfricuisse faciem, et absterso
" pudore linguam volvere. Hoc malum ex eo fonte manat, quod
" non perpenditur quid sit ecclesiastici concionatoris tum dig-
" nitas, tum difficultas, tum utilitas."

function! These are so many, that under the weight of them (to use the words of one of the fathers) "the "shoulders of angels themselves might groan."

Ministers are in scripture designed by the names of rulers, teachers, stewards, shepherds, servants, watchmen, labourers, soldiers, and the like, all of them expressive of both great trust and great toil. Whoever would exercise any one of them aright, must have many wearisome days, and restless nights; much fatigue of body, and anxiety of mind. But when they must all unite in one character; *who*, O God! is *sufficient for all these things!*

Our office is an office of labour. In it, the wicked and slothful servant are but one and the same character. In it, an idle hour must therefore be always set down as a guilty one; and every moment must be occupied, or God, conscience, and perishing souls may upbraid us; as the moments which we waste in trifles, and the breath which we spend in talk, might, if applied properly, be the means of saving souls. Our office is an office of labour. It obliges us to carry our children in our bosom, *as a nurse her child;* to suffer their murmurings and ingratitudes without abandoning them; to aim at uniting in duty and observance of the law, all the different humours and inclinations of which they are made up; and to double our diligence, in proportion as they study to render our diligence useless. Our office is a station of eminence, where it is difficult to stand, and unspeakably dangerous to fall. It is, besides, an incommodious elevation, which exposes to the observation of the public, and

renders many things, in themselves *lawful*, to us *not expedient;* on account of the weakness of our brethren. And as we must often reprehend vice, we are often exposed to the hatred of those whom we ardently wish to save.

Our office is a dangerous charge, which renders us responsible to God for a vast number of souls, whose salvation or ruin must be in a great measure owing to us; so that we must be, in some degree, answerable for the sins of others as well as for our own. Our office is an awful dispensation, which commits to us the mysteries of God, and the fruits of the death of Christ; so that the least unfaithfulness becomes an abuse of his blood, and renders the inestimable benefits of his cross of none effect. It has a post of vigilance, which obligeth us to bear the spiritual armour of our sacred warfare always in our hands, to combat against flesh and blood, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, and against the corruptions of the age in which we live. Otherwise, the crimes which we tolerate become our own, and public vices, whatever may be our personal innocence, become our particular faults. "The labours of a minister (says Luther) "exhaust the very marrow from the bones, and hasten forward old age and death."* These labours are fitly compared to the toil of men in harvest, to the labours of a woman in travail, and to the agonies or last efforts of soldiers in the extremity of battle. We

* "Labores Ecclesiastici exhauriunt ab imis medullis, senium "mortemque accelerant."

must watch, when others sleep; we must study to paleness; we must preach to faintness. Instant in season and out of season, we must instruct the ignorant, reprove the wicked, exhort the negligent, alarm the presumptuous, strengthen the weak, visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, reclaim the wandering, and confirm the faithful. Is there on earth an office of greater labour: a situation less easy, or more dangerous than ours? Is there in the world a greater mistake, than to seek for rest here, where least of all it is to be found?

But, although you may not be moved by the hopes of gain or ease, yet still you may be incited by the prospect of honour. The reverence or respect annexed to the sacred office, when properly discharged, may perhaps allure you. If this be the motive of any of you, my brethren, it is, I fear, worse than any of those already mentioned. No Scylla or Charybdis ever feigned by the poets, could be more fatal to you than this rock, on which so many before you have made shipwreck.* Nay, Satan himself could not have contrived a more effectual way to ruin you than this; for it is to set up yourself instead of Christ; it is to preach yourself instead of him. And what can be more provoking to the dread Majesty of heaven and earth, than to see a worm claim a preference to him, and his servant challenge more regard to himself, than to his

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* Teterrimus ille vanæ gloriæ spiritus longe infestior illo Sirenum portento quod poetæ confirgunt. *Vid.* CHRYSOST. *de Sacred.*

Maker and Master? The language of your selfish soul is not, "What shall I say, or how shall I say "it, so as to please and glorify God, and do most "good to the souls of men?" but, "What shall I say, "and how shall I deliver it, so as to be thought an "excellent preacher, and to be admired and applaud-"ed by all who hear me?"*

Admiration and applause you may perhaps obtain, for these are crumbs which the master of the family sometimes throws to the most worthless animals in his house, for whom he had nothing greater in reserve. But then, when you have these, *verily I say unto you, you have your reward.* And a poor reward it is, of which the Spanish poet, *Lope de Vega*, has given us the real estimate. To this man, Fame had assigned one of the highest seats in her temple. No person of eminence visited Spain withot seeking his personal acquaintance. Men yielded him precedence when they met him in the streets, and women saluted him with benedictions when he passed beneath their windows. During a long life, all ranks seemed to have united in honouring, and almost idolizing him. But, of all these honours, hear his own sentiment, as he was about to leave them. "True honour," said he, "consists in doing and being good; and all the ap-"plauses which I ever received, I would willingly "exchange for the addition of a single deed of virtue "to the actions of my life."

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* See Bostwick's Sermon on the Influence of a Selfish Spirit upon Preaching.

How poor, then, is the applause which may fall to the vain and selfish, compared to the solid and lasting reward of the useful and faithful minister of Jesus! And, if the first be yours, my brethren, in the latter you can never have any share. For you will never be honoured as the instruments of saving souls. Or if, by an uncommon miracle, and the extraordinary grace of God, you should, yet be assured, that, after having thus preached the gospel to others, you yourselves must be cast away. Many of those servants whom the King of heaven hath sent out to invite his guests, although they may have had some success in their message, will not have the honour of sitting down with him at his table; yet he will *gird himself*, and, as it were, condescend to *serve* such of them as were most zealous and faithful, whose sole aim was to promote his glory, and bring souls to heaven.

In subordination, however, to this honour, which comes from God, I would not have you to be altogether indifferent to that which comes from men, especially from the wise and good. To the man who combines great virtue with great knowledge, and who employs both in promoting the temporal and eternal interests of mankind, the veneration of mankind is due; and, to make altogether light of it, is rather a sign of pride than of humility. But, if this honour is not altogether to be despised, it is still less to be courted, and, least of all, to be aimed at. *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.* And, if we preach him as we ought, our discourses

will rather be felt by the heart, than praised by the tongue. That they should be followed by both these effects, was thought so unlikely by one of the fathers, that he wept when his hearers praised his sermon; for then he thought he had missed his purpose.

Besides examining thus into the *purity of your intentions*, you must observe, that your morals be also pure. Read, read often and carefully, the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus. These, as St. Augustin says, ought to lie for ever before the eyes of all persons set apart for the holy ministry. In these you see what an unblemished character is required of such as minister in holy things. And without such a character, you must not presume to enter the holy of holies, lest the invisible hand of that God, who guards his own sanctuary, thrust you back as a bold intruder, and a profaner of his holy place and name. The man who appeared at the gospel supper in an ordinary robe, without the wedding garment, is rejected, although called; and will you, in a robe only ordinary, appear where you are to preside, to distribute, and to consecrate? If God required, that even his sacrifices should be without blemish, how can he bear that the priest himself should be impure? Can you, uncalled of God, thrust yourself forward, without the necessary qualification which we speak of, to that altar which even angels may approach with fear? Can you, being dead yourself, become the minister of life to others? Can you inspire them with a love to that piety to which your own soul is a stranger? No; *the man*

that shall ascend to the hill of God, or dwell within his holy place, must have a pure heart, and clean hands. Like the brightness of Goshen amidst the obscurity of Egypt, his example and conversation must be *a burning and shining light* amidst the ignorance and darkness of the world. He must have a more than ordinary piety, and, with all that, a lively and deep sense of his own unworthiness impressed upon his soul. He must have that soft and gentle, that meek and humble, that charitable and compassionate temper, which Jesus requires more peculiarly of his ministers, and of which he himself was so bright a pattern. He must be willing, that all he is, and all he has, should be spent, and, as it were, absorbed in the service of God. For, the glory of God, in the salvation of souls, is the end in which all his prayers, desires, studies, labours, living and dying, ought to centre. And, if he may only promote this, he obtains his highest wish, his joy is fulfilled. For, his heart's desire is to sacrifice himself, his means, his health, his life, to Christ; begging of him to dispose absolutely of them all, for the advancement of his glory, in the salvation of his people. And if such, my young brethren, are not your morals, if such are not your sentiments and dispositions, you ought to have *neither lot nor part in this matter.*

You must further examine, if you have talents suited to the sacred office to which you aspire. Moses himself, however well qualified by all his learning and wisdom, was afraid to enter on the embassy to

which God called him, because he was *slow of speech*. Men rush not on ordinary employments in life, without talents suited to these employments. And will you, without the proper qualifications, venture upon the most august and important office under heaven? "Were I desired," says Chrysostom,* "to pilot a "ship, with the most valuable cargo, through the "tempestuous Ægean sea, I would retire with terror "from the dangerous office to which I was not equal." But how much more dangerous and important is the task of guiding souls to happiness? And how rash and mad must he be, who will undertake it without the proper qualifications? How many souls must he involve, together with his own, in one general ruin!

Besides talents, you must have an insatiable passion for study and improvement, without which the brightest talents will soon contract a rust, and become, in a great measure, useless to the world, and to their owner. He, therefore, who neglects to cultivate his talent, acts the same part with him in the gospel, who hid it in a napkin, and may one day expect to share in his fate. But of this subject I have spoken already, and need not here enlarge. Let me rather call upon you, my young brethren, to examine, in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, whether your views be upright, your morals pure, your talents good, and your application to study unwearied and unremitting. Examine, whether you

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* De Sacerd.

have that knowledge, zeal, piety, meekness, love, and other qualifications mentioned, as belonging to the sacred character. If you have, we rejoice to give you *the right hand of fellowship*. And, when God thinks fit to call us away, we shall, with the greatest pleasure, resign our life, and resign our charge, when we have the view of being more worthily succeeded.

But, if you have not these qualifications, we tremble for the church, we tremble for the souls of whom you take the charge, but, most of all, we tremble for yourselves, when we see you come forward, with unhallowed hands, to touch the ark. Any pretence of *a call* to the sacred office, without these qualifications, is false. Without these you must not, therefore, rush upon an office with which God hath not honoured even angels. And, to thrust yourselves forward in the place of Christ, as his ambassadors, and to handle his ordinances, uncommissioned, uncalled, unqualified; heavens! what treasures of wrath must you heap on yourselves if you do it. You may perhaps think, that a call or commission from men may bear you out. Ah! no; their *licence* is but a permission to rush on to your own perdition; their *imposition of hands* is but the giving you over as a devoted victim, to the wrath of heaven. It is but loading your head, like that of the scape-goat of old (if I may use so sacred a type for a comparison,) not with your own sins, but with the sins of your people. Wherefore, my young brethren, I beseech you, let no vain imagination of profit, honour, or ease, impel you blindly on to this important office,

where the things which you seek can never be found by you, or found only with damnation involved in their bosom, as thunderbolts in clouds, whose skirts at a distance may seem to be fair. Yes, my brethren, if higher views do not attract you, soon will you find, that you are but scrambling up the face of a precipice, where the danger of tumbling down increases every step as you go forward. And should you reach the height to which you aspire, you will by no means find there the ease or comfort which you expected. You will stand trembling on the dangerous eminence, and wish you had still remained in the safe, but humble valley, from which you departed. Nor shall you stand long, when the last awful messenger, commissioned by God, shall toss you headlong down, and the divine wrath pursue you to the lowest hell. For it may be justly inferred, that no man can have a larger share in the miseries of another life, than a wicked minister.

But you will, perhaps, tell me, that you will reform, and acquire, in the exercise of the sacred office, those dispositions which you did not bring to it. I answer, Never, without a miracle, upon which you, of all men, have the least title to presume. For he who enters upon the ministry without piety, is much more likely to arrive soon at profanity. "He contracts a callousness by his insensible way of "handling divine matters, by which he becomes "hardened against them, and by which he is so far "put out of the reach of conviction, in all the or-"dinary methods of grace, that it is scarce possible

" he can ever be awakened, and, by consequence, " that he can be saved. And if he perishes, he " must fall into the lowest degree of misery, even to " the portion of hypocrites; for his whole life is a " course of hypocrisy, in the strictest sense of the " word, which is acting a part, and the counterfeit- " ing another person. His sins have in them all pos- " sible aggravation; they are against knowledge, and " against vows, and contrary to his character; they " carry in them a deliberate contempt of all the " truths and obligations of religion; and, if he pe- " rishes, he does not perish alone; but he carries a " shoal down with him, either of those who have " perished in ignorance through his neglect, or of " those who have been hardened in sin through his " ill example."*

I repeat it, my brethren, he who enters on this office with wrong views and dispositions, commits an error in the foundation, which, instead of mending, becomes the more dangerous as the building advances. Such a person is the object of God's wrath; and the Holy Spirit, the only sanctifier, will not vouchsafe to dwell with him. The very ordinances, of which he is the dispenser, will serve only to harden him. Every time he administers them, he commits a new crime. He was born in sin, he lives in guilt, he dies in impenitence. He sinks under the guilt of usurpation and profanation together. His disease is *incurable as the wound of Samaria.*

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* Massilon.

You see, then, my young brethren, how you ought to conceive of this august office, on which you are about to enter. You see the views, the morals, and the talents which you ought to have, if you would handle the mysteries of God, and stand at his holy altar. Examine, therefore, if you are possessed of these, and use every mean to ripen, strengthen, and perfect them. Keep always the end of the sacred office in view; and, in your conduct, conversation, and company, show that you are separated from the world, devoted to God, and probationers for the ministry. Be guarded in the choice of your company, be circumspect in your conduct, and let your conversation be grave, cheerful, and modest. Avoid alike flattery and slander, words that are idle, as well as those that are hurtful; and consider yourselves each as an apostle, whose speech should always tend to edify. Be not conformed to the world, nor to its vain customs, nor follow the maxims and manners of worldly men. For this purpose, keep always in your eye the example of your Master, and the precepts of the gospel, and consider what holiness of life, and purity of heart, they require in the sacred character with which you are about to be invested. In this straight line hold on immoveably, without turning to the right or to the left, though men should say you are stiff and formal. Never affect to please in any thing foreign to your character; for, if you have social and convivial talents, you may thereby fall into a snare. Neither are you to put on the affectation of extraordinary sanctity; for cant and grimace are both

suspicious and disgusting. You may be holy, without coveting too much to be thought so. It is best, with the simplicity of children, to appear always the very thing you are, without making any shew of being better, which would make you suspected of being worse. If you are sometimes in company, be still oftener in retirement, and practise self-denial in all its parts, even to severity. Remember, that even what is lawful may be far from expedient. How oft has this been verified by the imprudence of forming too early the innocent connections with the other sex; an error the more dangerous, that it is beyond the reach of cure from repentance. In this respect; then, keep your hearts with all diligence; or, in other words, keep your distance. "The heart of a young man be-"side a young woman," says an Eastern poet, "is "like butter before the fire; it will melt if you do not "keep at a distance." Be, therefore, wise as serpents, while you are innocent as doves. Above all things, be much in prayer, much in meditation,* much in study. In regard to the plan of study which you ought to follow, or the books you ought to read in every science, particularly your own, it is difficult to give you any general rules; the tastes, and capacities, and circumstances, and situations of men being so various; and new books, like new generations of men, daily pushing the old off the stage, and occupying their place. It is best to leave you to some pious,

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* Tria faciunt theologum, precatio, meditatio, tentatio.
LUTHER.

prudent, and learned friend; only recommending to you to avoid all idle and profane books, and, above all things, to read and search the scriptures. He is always the best divine who is best acquainted with the scriptures.* Be, therefore, always conversant with them, and set your hearts betimes on acquiring and excelling in all those dispositions and qualifications which we have shown to be essential to the sacred character. May these be in you and abound! May the Lord of the harvest pave the way for your entering into his vineyard; and, when you shall have come in, may he bless your labours with abundant success! In the mean time, may we, who are already engaged in the sacred office, always maintain the like thoughts of its nature and importance. We are the servants of God; the ambassadors of Christ, and the ministers of his love to mankind. Let us imitate his example in meekness, tenderness, heavenly-mindedness, piety, and zeal. His zeal is great for us; let ours be so for him. Let us leave to the dead the burying of their dead. Let us leave to the world its cares and contentions about things of little moment. We are called to a higher warfare; to advance the kingdom of Christ, to gain souls, to save ourselves. With indefatigable zeal and patience, let us try every way to execute our commission. Let us have bowels of pity for sinners, who are nodding on the edge of a tremendous precipice, on the brink of a flaming tophet. Our glorious opportunities are

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* Bonus textuarius, bonus theologus. LUTHER.

hastening to a close. A few more days, and we must be no longer stewards. Life, like a rapid stream, is passing by. Death, on his *pale horse*, approaches; and behind him follow heaven and hell, those glorious and dreadful realities, to one or other of which every soul that leaves this world is eternally assigned. Let us then, for the love of God, in the name and bowels of Jesus, and in compassion to immortal souls of which we have the charge, be zealous and diligent in our labours, that we may be able to give our account with joy, and not with grief. Let our diligence increase in proportion as we approach the goal, and often reflect on the hastening moment that shall end our warfare. Let us sow the seed, let us plant, let us water. And, though we may not always see a ready and visible success, yet he who giveth the increase, knoweth in what time it is fittest to do it; perhaps when our eye can no longer behold it. *The seed grew*, saith our Saviour, *while the husbandman slept*. We would wish to see the immediate fruit of our labour; but God doth not always permit this, lest we should ascribe to ourselves the effects of his grace, and the work of his Spirit. His will be done. Only let us be diligent, and leave our portion of the vineyard more improved to other labourers, who will very soon succeed us. Then, although *one sow and another reap*, we shall rejoice together in the day of the harvest. Amen.

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